

The Shadow of the Scourge, by Paul Cornell

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[Part One]

CHANTING: Orm, Orm, Orm (continues under)

ANNIE: We call out to you, great Orm, across the void between the solar systems, across the space between the stars, across the gap between the universes. We know you are watching us. We know you wish us well. We know you want to be one with us. Now come to us, enter us, communicate through us. I think, yes, I think he's coming through. (puts on a voice) I am Orm. I bring you greetings of peace and joy. Why have you called me from my meditations?

MARY: We called you because we desire knowledge, great enlightened one. We desire to be more perfect, that we may be ready for your silver ship to land.

BRIAN: (laughs) Oh, for crying out loud.

MARY: Shush. You'll break the link.

ANNIE: (voice) There is one here who is unenlightened, who does not have faith in me.

BRIAN: That'd be me. Hi.

ANNIE: (voice) Bring him here, that I may lay hands on him, that he will understand

BRIAN: Oh, no need to shove, Mary. I'd quite like to shake hands with Mister Orm, since he's the reason you've spent so much money coming here. I wanted to see what you do at these things. I thought maybe we could spend some time together since the schedules match so well, but this is too much. Hello, Mister Spaceman, I'm Brian Hughes, director of Hughes Aviation. I'm with the other convention down the hall. Pleased to meet urgh! Argh!

(Gasps from the crowd.)

MARY: Brian! What are you doing to him?

ORM: Silence. All is well. I am Orm, but now I am speaking to you through this body.

MARY: Brian! Brian, stop it. It's not funny.

ANNIE: We are truly blessed, Orm, that you have found another host. Join with me for a moment's consultation, that I may know your will.

(Rattle of curtain.)

ANNIE: Very funny, Mister Hughes. I like the voice. You're a pro, but you're on my territory here and I'm giving you one warning to get off it. The name Orm is copyright to Annie Carpenter Enterprises, and if you go and

ORM: Annie, I am Orm.

ANNIE: And I'm Mother Teresa, which I have been on a professional basis, but right now I'm no saint, and I'm telling you

ORM: You felt my presence in the past, Annie. In dreams, in moments of tiredness, in your head. You know, you poor con artist, that you actually chanced upon something in the great beyond, but of course with your rough mythology of dolphins, crystals and money, you had no idea what it actually was. It's a pleasure in this new body to be able to talk to you at last.

ANNIE: No, you're not real. You're a character. Damn it, I created you.

ORM: Do you want to see what I really look like, Annie?

ANNIE: No. No, you psycho. I'm going to get out of here.

ORM: Listen. You can't move.

ANNIE: No. No. Help.

ORM: Listen. Your voice is so quiet and small they can't hear you through that curtain.

ANNIE: No, please stop.

ORM: You are property. Your kind belong to us. When we are finished here you will all belong to us. Listen. You can move your head, but only to look at me. Only to see my true form. Look at me, Annie.

ANNIE: No, don't make me. Please don't make me. Ah! Ah, no. No!

ORM: That sensation you feel is what happens when you see one of your betters, when you see an eight-dimensional being. Your mind is opening, Annie, and as it does, the gate you so unconsciously opened is getting wider, wider, and wider, until it lets in

ANNIE: Please, I can't.

BRIDGEHEAD: I am here, Demi-leader. We are two.

ORM: We will hide within these bodies. Give them back to their hosts. We will emerge when the leader has been

BRIAN: Summoned. What? What am I doing here?

ANNIE: I don't know, Mister Hughes. I suppose Orm must have wanted to talk to you alone. Was it an illuminating experience?

BRIAN: No, of course it wasn't.

(Curtain pulled aside.)

MARY: Hello? Miss Carpenter, you've had my husband back here for such a long time we were wondering if everything was oh! What's that on your hand? And on yours, Miss Carpenter. Are you hurt?

ANNIE: No. It must be some sort of er psychic mark. It looks like a pentagram.

BRIAN: It's just a shadow. A shadow of something much larger, in Time and Space.

MARY: Brian, you sound like a believer. How did you know all that?

BRIAN: I don't, I don't know.

LIFT: Ground floor. Doors opening.

DOCTOR: Ground floor. Horror, tragedy and mysterious deaths.

ACE: Nice to have arrived sensibly for once.

BENNY: Yes, good of the Tardis to have landed on the roof where it's not going to attract a lot of attention. Far too good of it.

DOCTOR: What do you mean, Professor Summerfield?

BENNY: I'm looking around what looks like a very ordinary twentieth century hotel lobby.

ACE: Oh look, the Pinehill Crest, Newmangate. That's somewhere in Kent, right?

DOCTOR: Correct. It's August the 15th 2003. A Friday afternoon. We're on a ring road around the shopping centre, near the multiplex, the Office Paradise, and the Carpet Warehouse.

ACE: Ah, wicked. I can pop out and see what's on at the pictures.

DOCTOR: Perhaps, but I have a feeling we won't be leaving too quickly.

BENNY: Oh yes, a feeling. A feeling based on the fact that you've got a very good idea why we're here and as usual you don't feel obliged to tell us.

DOCTOR: Please, Bernice, have a little faith.

ACE: You mentioned tragedies, Professor, and horror, mysterious deaths?

DOCTOR: Look over there. The policeman at reception. Read his lips.

BENNY: Wise old biddy?

DOCTOR: Where's the body.

ACE: Ah. So this feeling that we won't be leaving

DOCTOR: Let's hope we can stop it spreading to the staff, the guests, the entire human race.

ACE: Terrific.

BENNY: The girl actually means it. Ho hum.

DOCTOR: You could always go back to the Tardis.

BENNY: As if. That receptionist isn't being much help to the policeman. She doesn't seem to know anything about a dead body.

DOCTOR: Really? Oh dear. I must have made the phone call too early. (sighs) I think we should probably step away from the lift.

(Ding!)

BENNY: Why?

DOCTOR: Because that's where the body is.

MICHAEL: Well, thank you all for coming. I think we're just about ready for the demonstration to begin. Can we just close the doors, please? We don't want to disturb the other functions going on at the hotel today. We have to be on our best behaviour. Thank you. My name is Doctor Michael Pembroke. And now, ladies and gentlemen, if you'll just observe the particle tracking chamber, it's as simple as this. I set the device to Ready mode, I calibrate the tracking apparatus, and now we're ready to fire.

(A short energy burst.)

MICHAEL: As you can see from the display screen, the proton has impacted with the target in the vacuum chamber, having tunneled through the lead sheets in between. Sounds like magic, doesn't it? But more than that, as these tracking charts show, the particle appeared here before it left the source here. Think of the applications in computing, in aviation. An aircraft with avionics systems based on my process would be the leader in its field. Talking of which, is Brian Hughes here yet? Yes, ladies and gentlemen, you've got stiff competition if you're going to bid to fund my work. Brian Hughes himself will be here today. He said he'd join us after he'd popped in to see his wife in one of the other conferences.

(Laughter.)

BRIAN: Do I hear my name being taken in vain?

MICHAEL: Mister Hughes, glad you could join us.

BRIAN: Oh listen, Doctor Pembroke, I wouldn't have missed this for the world

BENNY: It's an old man. Homeless, by the look of it.

ACE: I can't see any obvious cause of death. I don't want to push my way through this lot to check. It looks like the policeman's waiting for his forensics unit to get here. Professor, what do you think we should

BENNY: Where's he got to?

DOCTOR: Here I am. A key for you, and one for you. We're booked into three rooms under the name of

Summerfield. Try not to empty the mini oh!

ACE: Professor, what's wrong?

DOCTOR: Just a little dizzy. Oh, could I sit down over there?

BENNY: I'll help you. Here we go.

DOCTOR: Oh, that's better.

ACE: What happened to you?

DOCTOR: Oh, it's only to be expected. There's a time experiment going on elsewhere in this building.

BENNY: There's a time experiment going on at a hotel in Kent? How baroque.

DOCTOR: This weekend, the Pinehill Crest has an unfortunate treble booking. In the William Rufus room they're hosting an audience with spiritual and extraterrestrial channeller Annie Carpenter. In the Princess Diana suite a Doctor Michael Pembroke is demonstrating his temporal accelerator to a group of leading industrialists. And in the Christopher Summerisle rooms there's a cross-stitch convention.

BENNY: So why are we booked in under my name? I hope you don't expect me to pick up the bill.

DOCTOR: Professor Summerfield, a hotel in Kent is one of the few places in the universe where the pseudonym John Smith might attract adverse attention.

BENNY: Ah. Point taken.

ACE: So what do you want us to do?

DOCTOR: Ace, you go and join the experiments, see if anything unusual happens. Bernice, you're with the channellers.

BENNY: Wonderful. Why do I always get the loonies?

DOCTOR: Not all mystics are loonies.

BENNY: What will you be doing while we're staking out the opposing belief systems of the human psyche?

DOCTOR: I'll be indulging my penchant for cross-stitching.

ACE: But what about the body?

DOCTOR: That's not important yet, but the triple booking is. Important to the future of the human race. The three bookings are the three things any fire needs. Be careful.

GARY: Mike, we're going to need more attendee badges. I got a call from Lisa. We're fully booked.

MIKE: So what if more people show up.

GARY: Oh, we'll let them in. Never mind the fire regulations. How much trouble can an audience of cross-stitch fans get into?

MIKE: I'll pop down the stationers in a minute.

GARY: Here's another one. The more the merrier.

DOCTOR: Are you Gary Williams, the organiser?

GARY: Yes. This is Mike Duff, chief steward.

MIKE: What can we do for you, sir?

DOCTOR: I'm an enthusiastic cross-stitcher, but I also freelance for a major national newspaper, and I was wondering if you might provide me with some information about tomorrow's convention.

GARY: Well, you being an enthusiast, I should think it's all pretty obvious. Dealer's room setting up, main hall, the bar.

DOCTOR: Ah yes, but my audience doesn't know about that. Just pretend you're describing it to an alien.

CHANTING: Orm. Orm.

ANNIE: Our communication was interrupted, great Orm. Speak to us once more. Tell us your universal message.

(Door opens.)

BENNY: Oh, er, hi. (door closes) Excuse me, is this the room with all the extraterrestrial channelling going on, or are you holding hands because you're really friendly?

ANNIE: Another unbeliever.

BENNY: No. No, far from it. I'm here because of my two poor little ones. They passed on many years ago, but I don't think I'm ever going to quite get over it.

MARY: Oh, we're so sorry. Please, join the circle. This is exactly what Miss Carpenter does best.

ANNIE: My spirit guide, Orm, is an extraterrestrial being, the incarnation of living light, abiding on the fourth planet orbiting the star Rigel.

BENNY: Great. Please, go on with your chanting. I'll hold hands and watch.

ANNIE: Take a chair, and enter the circle beside me. Move up, please, Mary. That's better. You're welcome in the company of Orm.

BENNY: So, who is this Orm chap?

ANNIE: Orm is a high evolutionary, a being who exists partly in our universe, and partly in higher dimensions. His physical form is that of a tall golden-skinned man with long blond hair and silver eyes. He's my guide to the wonders that lie beyond space and beyond death. Let us summon him on behalf of this newcomer, Miss?

BENNY: Oh, Professor. Bernice Summerfield.

ANNIE: And what are the names of your little ones?

BENNY: Squidgy and Speckly.

ANNIE: Strange.

BENNY: So was their father.

ANNIE: Are we talking about children?

BENNY: Children? Oh, dear me, no. Not with my lifestyle. Squidgy and Speckly were my turtles.

MARY: You're making fun of us.

BENNY: I'm not. They were my pets. Actually, my only companions during a long period spent in isolation. When that isolation ceased, they were killed by the men who came to arrest me.

ANNIE: I'm sorry. I can see you're sincere. I've contacted a number of beloved animals on the other side.

BENNY: So there really is an other side for them? Someone looks after turtles and little fishes?

ANNIE: Someone looks after everything, Professor Summerfield. That's one of the lessons of Orm. Everyone gets their just desserts. Now, let us focus on the Professor's pets, and begin again. Deep breaths You can repeat the mantra with us, Professor.

CHANTING: Orm. Orm.

ANNIE: (voice) I am here once more. What is your request, Professor Summerfield?

BENNY: Oh, you've heard of me.

ANNIE: (voice) I am aware of the vibrations of all beings.

BENNY: I have a question for you, Orm.

ANNIE: (voice) What is it?

BENNY: Well, you're on Rigel Four, right?

ANNIE: (voice) Correct.

BENNY: Do you know Johnny Clark? Tall chap, frizzy hair, reads the weather on Rigel Nightly News. I know Rigel Four's a big place and it's like you say you know someone in New Zealand and everybody asks if they know the person that you know and what?

ANNIE: (voice) You are mocking us. Laughter is good for the, laughter is good for (gasps)

BENNY: Miss Carpenter!

MARY: I thought you were sincere. Stress like this drains her energy.

BENNY: And the wound on her hand can't help. Nasty. Would you like me to slap some antiseptic on this?

ANNIE: (voice) Please, do not touch the mark on the hand of my (gasp)

BRIDGEHEAD: Do not touch the shadow.

BENNY: Oh dear. Terribly sorry.

ANNIE: I must withdraw. Er, to regain my concentration. I will return in a few minutes and we'll begin again. (Curtain rattles.)

BENNY: Wild night on Rigel Four last night, was it?

(Power dying down.)

MICHAEL: And that's a complete systems analysis showing, I hope, the many industrial uses of this prototype. Now, hands up, are there any questions?

BRIAN: Er yes, if I might cut in.

MICHAEL: Ah, Mister Hughes. I knew you'd be hot off the blocks. That's a nasty burn on your hand there.

BRIAN: Don't know how I got it, either. I'm being a brave lad.

(Laughter.)

BRIAN: Er, I was just wondering, how do you define a co-reality for your particles on a moment by moment basis? Surely the uncertainty principle states that as they reach relativistic speeds the idea of measuring the position, velocity, whatever, becomes almost meaningless.

MICHAEL: I see you've been reading up on this, Mister Hughes.

BRIAN: (baffled) Yes. Yes, I suppose I must have been.

MICHAEL: We use what's called the vacuum effect, accelerating theorised particles that may or may not exist beneath the quantum level of reality. We deal with the absolute building blocks of time and space. The plot of the universe, as it were. If we can find a hole in that plot, then

BRIAN: Instantaneous travel throughout the universe, even between this universe and others, will become a reality.

MICHAEL: Mister Hughes, we should put you on our sales force. Assuming there are no other questions, and that Mister Hughes doesn't want to buy us on the spot, we'll now break for tea and biscuits to allow you to talk things over between yourselves. Copies of the tech specs are available by the door.

ACE: Nice machine you've got there, Doctor Pembroke.

MICHAEL: Thank you, but who are you? Who do you work for?

ACE: I'm Ace. I just work for me.

MICHAEL: Well then, should you be in here?

ACE: Probably not. Hey, don't shove!

MICHAEL: Mister Hughes, what can I do for you?

BRIAN: I just wondered if I could examine a few elements of your device more closely.

MICHAEL: Certainly, certainly. Thanks for the sales pitch back there. I wouldn't have dared go as far as that.

BRIAN: Oh, listen. Shack up with us and you'll go a long way, Doctor Pembroke. Who's this?
MICHAEL: Er, this is, I don't know who she is. Look, would you go now? This is a private function.
ACE: I'm just looking. I love time travel.
ORM: Listen.
ACE: Who are you telling to listen, handy boy? Drop the attitude or I'll burn the rest of your fingers.
MICHAEL: Er, Ace, let me show you to the door.
ACE: Well, all right, 'cos you're okay, but that scumbag is bad news. (sotto) Don't let him near the data settings. (receding) See ya!
MICHAEL: What? How could she know about the data settings?
BRIAN: Doctor Pembroke. Yeah, are these the data settings?
MICHAEL: Yes. Yes, they are.

ACE: Oh, nobody ever lets me fiddle with their science experiments. I mean, what do they think I'm going to do to them, break them or something?

(Bump, clatter.)

MIKE: Oh, for crying out loud.

ACE: I'm sorry. Here, let me

MIKE: No, it's all right. Won't take me long to pick them up. Only about twenty quid in five pence pieces.

ACE: All right, I apologised. You should have been looking where you were going.

MIKE: Oh, nice costume. Is that a real knife?

ACE: Yeah. Is that a problem?

MIKE: No, I don't think. Oh, my God. What's going on over there? Has someone been hurt?

ACE: That? Oh no, just someone dead, under the blanket. The copper's sealed off the area around the lift until his mates get here. Haven't found anyone who knows who the corpse is yet. Big bloke, old, long beard. He looks like a homeless guy.

MIKE: Oh no, that's old Will. We saw him every time we popped in to talk to the staff about the convention. Nice old soul. He used to forage in the bins behind the hotel.

LIFT: Doors closing.

MIKE: What are they doing with him?

ACE: Well, if I was that copper, I'd have done the same. He's put the body back in the lift, sent it up somewhere, maybe to the staff level, shut the thing down. He'll have to run about questioning people while he's on his own, and he can't guarantee the security of the crime scene otherwise.

MIKE: You know a lot about this stuff.

ACE: Yeah, too much. Oh, poor bloke. Why'd you reckon he was in the lift?

MIKE: He'd have slipped in to have a bath. He was always doing stuff like that. The staff here all turned a blind eye.

ACE: Knew him well, then, did you?

MIKE: As well as you can know someone who lives on the streets. He'd wander over when we parked the car and ask for spare change. Not much patter. He was always so depressed. It was like he could only just about put one foot in front of the other. And he always had such bad luck. Last time I saw him, he'd got this wound on his hand.

ACE: What sort of wound?

MIKE: It looked like a burn, or maybe someone had had a go at him with a knife. There was a pattern to it.

ACE: Oh, nasty. You said you were here for the convention, so are you the lot who

MIKE: Association of Cross-Stitch Enthusiasts.

ACE: Ah.

MIKE: I'm meant to be running into town to get some badges before Smith's close.

ACE: You're out of luck, mate. The copper's told this lot that nobody leaves.

MIKE: Wonderful. Gary's filling the event to bursting and they'll all be wandering about without us having a clue who they are. It's a shambles.

ACE: My mum used to do cross-stitching. Aren't you a bit young?

MIKE: It's an art form that transcends age and gender.

ACE: Yeah, right.

MARY: That was very bad of you. Miss Carpenter's energies are easily dissipated.

BENNY: I'm sorry, I get silly when I'm nervous. How did you get involved in all this Orm business?

MARY: I'm Mary Hughes. The wife of Brian Hughes? Director of Hughes Aviation?

BENNY: Oh. That Brian Hughes.

MARY: That's what everybody says.

BENNY: I was just being polite. I've never heard of him.

MARY: Thank goodness. Brian and I don't really, we really don't have much in common, so he goes off to his aviation things and I stay at home. But this weekend, well, I'd read Miss Carpenter's book and seen her on a chat show. They so ridiculed her.

BENNY: You don't say.

MARY: And I thought she sounded really sincere. It's such an exciting field of study. Just as interesting as Brian's aerospace things. Orm could provide him with new ideas, I thought, put his firm ahead of the others. And with the two events in the same hotel, it seemed a chance to bring our interests together. But it didn't work out that way.

BENNY: You didn't get him into cross-stitching?

MARY: What, Brian? He's always too busy with his technical work. I was so hoping that when he saw Miss Carpenter, Brian would be interested. I get so lonely when he's away. But he didn't really stay long enough to understand the ideas. So he made fun of her, and when he realised nobody was laughing, he went back to his work.

BENNY: I'm really sorry. I think it's a great idea for you to get out and do whatever you want to do.

MARY: Orm even reached out to him, put a mark on his hand to demonstrate the reality of his presence. You know, like the one on Miss Carpenter's hand.

BENNY: Ah. Do you know, I'm feeling rather guilty that I got in the way of the whole ceremony. Can I pop back and see Miss Carpenter, let her know I'm not going to disrupt everything again?

MARY: Oh, that's lovely of you. She'll be meditating behind the curtain.

BENNY: Back in a bit.

GARY: So, how long have you been a cross-stitcher?

DOCTOR: Oh, from when I was born (sotto) the seventh time. (normal) How many attendees do you have here?

GARY: Six hundred and sixty three? Give or take four or five.

DOCTOR: Oh, very funny. Very appropriate.

GARY: Sorry?

DOCTOR: Oh, not you. Oh, sorry, must dash. Look at the time.

GARY: Where are you off to?

DOCTOR: I've arranged to meet someone. Don't worry, I'll be back.

BENNY: Annie? Annie, are you here?

ANNIE: I'm here. I'm meditating.

BENNY: Does the sherry help?

ANNIE: So many critics today. It's the scent of rose petals, all right? From the other world. It's

BENNY: Are you all right?

ANNIE: No. My guts are just churning today, and I have a headache. The vibrations are, oh, forget it. I can't keep this going while I'm feeling like this. And you've got that wry thing going on with your eyebrows. So, are you here to expose me, or take your cut, or what? Are you one of those sceptics?

BENNY: Not professionally, and no, I won't expose you. Not in front of Mary.

ANNIE: You understand why I do this, then. I'm a social worker.

BENNY: Except it costs her a lot more than counselling would.

ANNIE: Cheaper than a shrink, though. Speaking of which, you haven't paid yet.

BENNY: I don't have any money. Are you pregnant?

ANNIE: What? Why do you? (sigh) How?

BENNY: Just one of my favourite questions to break the ice at dinner parties and move the conversation away from monetary matters.

ANNIE: So I am. So what.

BENNY: So nothing. I just wondered why you were ill.

ANNIE: Oh, I wish I knew. It's too early for morning sickness.

BENNY: How does your partner feel about this game of yours?

ANNIE: He thinks people who believe this stuff deserve all they get. Which isn't the way I see it, but, hey, he loves me and he doesn't care. Right now, that is. When I tell him about the baby I think he's going to run for the hills.

BENNY: Ah.

ANNIE: I'm going to let him know tonight, after I've had a few more rose petals.

BENNY: Is that why you picked this hotel for your only appearance outside London? Because your boyfriend lives round here?

ANNIE: He doesn't.

BENNY: Where did you get that burn on your hand?

ANNIE: You ask a lot of questions. I wish I knew some of the answers.

BENNY: It's a pattern, isn't it? Like a pentagram.

BRIDGEHEAD: Do you want to touch it?

BENNY: And why would I want to do that?

ANNIE: Yeah, why?

BENNY: I don't know.

ANNIE: Hard day.

BENNY: Right, well, here's my deal for you, Annie. If you let me sit in on the next session, I won't disrupt it. I just want to see what you can really do.

ANNIE: You want to learn the business, you mean. How to fleece the punters.

BENNY: How very cynical of you.

(Machine humming.)

BRIAN: So if I make an adjustment here, a time-space curve starts to form.

MICHAEL: Well, yes, but I've never. This is beyond any experiment I've ever conducted. Mister Hughes, how are you doing this?

BRIAN: I don't know. I'm not sure even why I'm doing it. It feels like there's something I've forgotten, something in the back of my head. There. Now we just have to leave it running.

MICHAEL: You've locked the controls. Mister Hughes, I'm impressed by your technical expertise, but I really must protest. It'll take me hours to run it back to the start rate, and we only have the room until six.

BRIAN: Time enough, Doctor Pembroke. Now if you'll excuse me, I have a few more things to attend to before whatever is going to happen, happens.

MICHAEL: Mister Hughes! Where are you going? The settings seem to be locked on some, some distant source. This is completely beyond anything. Oh well, run with it, Michael. (microphone) Excuse me everyone. Mister Hughes and I have been running some tests and he's set the machine for a specific task. If any of you have any technical questions from on, I'm afraid we'll only be able to talk about them on a theoretical basis. (sotto) Oh dear. I hope it's supposed to be doing that.

MIKE: So is that guy working for the police, then?

ACE: What guy?

MIKE: The guy at the main doors.

ACE: No, he's not. That's the bloke from the experiment. Hey! Mister Hughes! What are you doing?

BRIAN: Well, this little box here locks the front doors of the hotel when I turn this key. (doors lock) And this switch here locks all the service doors. And I've completely attended to the fire doors, so now we're all completely locked in.

ACE: Ah well, thanks for that. So now you're going to unlock us.

MIKE: There's a policeman in the hotel. He'll be back down here in a minute. Come on, there are people outside trying to get in.

BRIAN: But they're the most fortunate people. Excuse me for a second.

MIKE: What's he

ACE: Oh, he's going to swallow the key! Stop him! You get your jaws open or. Oh, too late.

BRIAN: Tastes metallic. Quite nice.

MIKE: Reception'll have another key, won't they?

BRIAN: They did. Two, in fact. I swallowed those as well. I really have no idea why I'm doing all this.

ACE: Right. I've always wanted to do this. Here's a great excuse.

MIKE: I really don't think you should throw that fire extinguisher at
(Thud, bounce.)

MIKE: The doors.

ACE: The glass didn't break.

BRIAN: Security glass, you see. They had a terrorist incident in the seventies.

MIKE: You're a maniac. When that policeman comes back I'm going to get him to arrest you.

BRIAN: Please do. That would feel so much more comfortable.

ANNIE: I have rested and we may begin again. I've talked to Professor Summerfield here, and I'm convinced she's a sincere seeker after truth, so she may rejoin us.

MARY: Oh good.

ANNIE: Take your seats once more. Take my hand, Professor. You may once more sit beside me. Now, all of you, together, focus, concentrate. We will re-establish contact with Orm,

CHANTING: Orm. Orm. Orm. Orm.

ANNIE: (sotto) Benny, you're hurting my hand. (normal) I can feel him. I can feel him approach through the ether.

BENNY: (sotto) Mary, I don't like this.

MARY: I can feel him too.

(Chanting gets faster and louder, then a single tone.)

BENNY: Excuse me? Hello, can any of you actually hear me?

BRIDGEHEAD: Contact is being established. The gateway is opening.

BENNY: All right, let go of my. Let go!

(The machine has a grating tone to it.)

MICHAEL: Now, everybody stay calm. This is quite normal. My God, look at these read-outs. What is it doing? We've locked on a distant source and the machine is running according to its own, its own paradigms now. We're doing some good science here, science that nobody's ever done before.

GARY: I don't believe it. Was that actually an, an earthquake?

(Crash, breaking, panic.)

GARY: The displays! Save the displays! Ah! That's my ten by ten dolphin swimming in the pacific! Stewart, Stewart, help the dealers. Jamie? Jamie, get the AV. Oh, what's going on? This isn't supposed to happen in Kent.

BRIAN: They're coming! They're coming through!

MIKE: Who are? What are you talking, what's he talking about?

ACE: Look at his eyes!

BRIAN: Get away from me, before it's too late.

ORM: Our leader is coming. Humans rejoice. Rejoice in your submission to the Scourge.

ACE: Do you reckon there are any weapons or security points or defences in this hotel, at all?

MIKE: I think the staff have a private bathroom. Other than that

ACE: Then I think it's time we found – Doctor!

DOCTOR: Hello. Ah, I see you've met the Demi-leader. Oh dear, he is having trouble. I think his host mind must be trying to fight him off.

BRIAN-ORM: You, we, will all die. We, you, are food for us.

(Ripping noise.)

MIKE: What just happened? It's got dark outside.

ACE: Professor, is it an eclipse? What's going on?

DOCTOR: It's not an eclipse. Everything's going to plan. Not long now.

(Machine sounds like it is going critical.)

MICHAEL: Get away! Everyone out the doors! The demonstration is over! We have to call the emergency services. Somebody get to a phone. Save yourselves! It's going to (Boom!)

CHANTING: Orm. Orm.

BENNY: Let go of me!

(Chanting stops with a gasp.)

BRIDGEHEAD: He has arrived. Our leader has materialised on this planet.

ACE: Professor, look! The lift. The lift where the dead body is. It's coming down.

DOCTOR: Yes, I'm expecting someone. That'll be him now.

(Lift door opens, gasps.)

MIKE: Old Will. But he's, he's dead!

LEADER: We meet at last, Time Lord.

ACE: Professor?

DOCTOR: Ace, stay back. I greet the Leader of the Great Unity of the Scourge. In the name of Gallifrey I welcome him to this universe, where he and his minions can feast.

ACE: Doctor!

LEADER: It is good. Everything has been done as we agreed. Do you have the document we requested?

DOCTOR: Yes, Great Leader. On behalf of the Time Lords I offer you the unconditional surrender of the planet Earth.

[Part Two]

MARY: What, what just happened?

BENNY: I don't know. Normally I get to experience a lot more pleasure before I wake up feeling like this. Goddess, what's happened to Annie?

MARY: Her eyes. Look at her eyes!

BRIDGEHEAD: I am changing this body, human.

MARY: That doesn't sound like Orm.

BENNY: Mary, you get the others out of here. I'll follow.

MARY: But

BENNY: Don't argue. Go on.

MARY: Oh, come on. Come out this way. (recedes) No, no, hurry along. Come on.

BRIDGEHEAD: There is no need for you to shield them. They are in no danger now.

BENNY: So you're a kind and peaceful insectoid alien.

BRIDGEHEAD: They are in no danger *now*, but they will be later.

BENNY: Ah. Somehow I knew that was what you meant. So you are aware that there's more than one of you in there? What's happened to the baby?

BRIDGEHEAD: I can feel another human presence within this form. When the Scourge fully materialise in this universe, it will become part of us, as all human beings will.

(Chitin creaking, groans.)

BRIDGEHEAD: The change continues.

BENNY: Oh, that is really icky. Excuse me . I've just got to go and powder my nose.

DOCTOR: Dear me. We seem to have attracted quite a crowd.

MIKE: What's happening? Why has it gone dark outside?

LEADER: Listen, all of you. Hotel staff and customers, leave us.

ACE: Doctor, talk to me. Why are they walking away? It's like it's hypnotised them.

DOCTOR: Stay calm, Ace. The Scourge can make people obey their commands. You obviously don't think of yourself as a customer.

(Chitin creaking, groans. People cry out in disgust.)

LEADER: You see my true nature. Run! Run and hide!

(Panic, screams.)

LEADER: Run like the mindless meat you are, cowards. Wait for us to come and get you.

ACE: Doctor, what are we going to do?

DOCTOR: Quiet, Ace.

ACE: Just tell me what's going on. Look, what's that piece of parchment? Have you gone and handed over the whole planet?

DOCTOR: Ace.

ACE: It's not yours, right?

DOCTOR: Well, I have saved it now and then. Finders keepers.

ACE: You've got (exasperated) You, cross-stitch boy, you're with me.

MIKE: What? But, hey!

DOCTOR: Ace!

LEADER: Stop her.

ORM: Yes, leader.

DOCTOR: What, do you mean she can get away? Is there somewhere for her to run?

LEADER: He is correct. Do not pursue her. There is nowhere she can go.

DOCTOR: Now, why don't we find somewhere quiet to discuss things. The manager's office behind the reception, yes? That looks private enough to look over the surrender documents. By the way, there are a couple of little points of law I'm very pleased with.

(Lots of coughing.)

MICHAEL: Everybody, get away from the machine. There may be danger of a secondary detonation. Here, give me that.

(Powder fire extinguisher.)

MICHAEL: What? There's something still going at the heart of the machine. Something glowing. My God, if the power cells are exposed... Everybody out of here! Someone call the Fire Service!

ACE: They won't come.

MICHAEL: You again.

ACE: Yep, me again. And you should have listened to me last time. Oh, this is my mate. What was your name again?

MIKE: Mike. Mike Duff. I'm with the cross-stitchers.

MICHAEL: What?

BENNY: Ace!

ACE: Oh, Benny. What happened with the séance?

BENNY: Big time alien possession. Body transformation job, insectised. Annie Carpenter has left the building.

MICHAEL: What?

ACE: Oh, the Doctor's pretending he's on the side of the aliens.

BENNY: So, no change there, then.

ACE: So I acted like I was all oh you've betrayed me, you've betrayed us all, and I ran off.

BENNY: Give the girl an Oscar.

ACE: Hey, hey! I think I even convinced *him*.

MICHAEL: What?

BENNY: That's three whats. Soon you'll have enough for a new battery.

MIKE: I suppose they'll tell us what's going on when they have a moment.

ACE: What it comes down to is this. Things have got well spooky, so get your coat, we're out of here.

MICHAEL: I can't let you just. Hey! My machine! The radiation. This suite's on hire and I really don't... Hey!

(Screams.)

GARY: Stop! Calm down! You'll knock over the displays!

(Growling.)

GARY: Oh my God! What is that thing?

ORM: Run. Cry out and run. We are the Scourge. We are here to consume you.

(Screams, breaking glass.)

GARY: Mike, thank God. We have to stop it. It's wrecking everything.

MIKE: It's got Julie trapped in a corner. I don't think it can see her behind the tables.

GARY: Hasn't anyone called the police?

ACE: There was one copper

BENNY: But we found the body in the corridor. He tried to take that thing on. It just ripped him apart.

MIKE: We're on our own now, Gary. The doors of the hotel have been locked.

GARY: Where did that thing come from? Is it Brian Hughes?

BENNY: It's taken over his body and it's changing it.

MIKE: Okay, now it's smashing up the displays. I think I can go and get Julie.

ACE: No, Mike. You don't know what these things can do.

MIKE: I'm sorry, I have to try.

GARY: Mike!

ORM: You! You are our prey.

MIKE: Keep away. Julie, run for it, before he

(Scream, crunch.)

GARY: Oh, dear God. Julie! Mike, get away from him!

ORM: Listen. Put your fingers to your neck.

MIKE: What, what are you going to do? I don't want to Ow!

GARY: Why is he doing what it says?

ACE: He can't help it.

BENNY: These bugs are persuasive.

ORM: Just there. That's right. Now push.

BENNY: No.

(Mike screams and gurgles.)

BENNY: Blessed Goddess, we have to do something!

ACE: That thing could make us do whatever it likes just by saying the words. We can't unstop this.

GARY: Maybe you can't, but I

ACE: You'll just get yourself killed! Your mate's as good as dead.

ORM: Harder. Push against your neck with all your strength.

MIKE: No, no

(Gurgle, thud.)

ORM: Ah, the first sweet death of so many.

DOCTOR: Paragraph three, subsection two point five, states that should your species ever lost control of this planet, become extinct, devolve to a pre-sentient state, etc., etc., except in the case of another alien race invading you, then all rights to the planet Earth revert back to me in perpetuity.

LEADER: We accept your conditions, Time Lord.

(Chitin cracks and creaks.)

DOCTOR: Ooo, what lovely new antennae you have there.

LEADER: So, if there is no more to be discussed?

DOCTOR: Ah, but we must get the little things right. You know, the devil's in the detail, so, where's Brian? He'd be fascinated by some of these sub-clauses.

LEADER: The Demi-Leader is creating fear and terror amongst the humans.

DOCTOR: Of course. You need a certain level of panic, don't you. Still, perhaps I should go and get him. You'll be needing him soon.

(Door opens.)

BRIDGEHEAD: Leader.

LEADER: I recognise the Bridgehead.

(Door closes.)

BRIDGEHEAD: This is the Time Lord?

DOCTOR: I prefer just Doctor. You must be Annie.

BRIDGEHEAD: I am the Bridgehead. I have never seen a Time Lord before. You are complicated.

DOCTOR: Oh well, I don't like to boast.

BRIDGEHEAD: I can see your shadow, stretching back and forward across what your people call Time. You have different facets, different faces.

DOCTOR: As do all my people.

BRIDGEHEAD: Some of them hidden.

DOCTOR: But none to you. If I break our bargain, I'm well aware of what will happen to me.

LEADER: You would be wise to remember that, Doctor. We have your soul in our keep. We have but to close our fist and you will be ours.

DOCTOR: Of course. As long as you still have a fist.

BRIDGEHEAD: I was interested in the trivial reward you accepted for betraying your entire cosmos. Such a small matter, a bio-dimensional implant. We use them to torture humans in our universe. We stretch them across different possibilities and allow their bodies to mutate over centuries.

DOCTOR: I had a different use in mind. Freedom for my mind to roam through all the manifold multiverse. Freedom to travel. You know of me. Surely you're aware what such liberty would mean?

LEADER: Indeed. It is the central feature of many texts concerning you.

DOCTOR: You've read about me? I'm so flattered.

LEADER: The stories were part of the intelligence material our army consumed when the Great Unity first devised this plan. Since we became aware the humans of this universe were the primary source for our feeding, we have sought to annex this cosmos, to take control of the resource and manage it more efficiently. We stepped through what you call Time, seeking a point where we would have an advantage, and that is where we found you on the astral plane, petitioning us, ready with your offer.

DOCTOR: I was just dreaming. You know, too much cheese before bedtime?

LEADER: That offer caused us to seek out all information about you. You take the side of one species over another in small conflicts within this universe. You often defend the humans.

DOCTOR: I suppose I do. I hadn't really paid attention to whose side I was on.

LEADER: You often lead those who would harm them into traps.

DOCTOR: That's true. Silly monsters, all of them. Only a very foolish species wouldn't see one of my traps coming. I rely on the fact that I'm much more intelligent than those I battle.

LEADER: Ironic, considering how small your intellect is compared to ours.

DOCTOR: Isn't it.

LEADER: Now, it is time to begin the focussing. I will summon the Demi-Leader.

DOCTOR: I'll go. Time is of the, yes, well, anyway. Adieu.

(Screaming.)

BENNY: I've never felt so helpless. That poor man.

GARY: You just stood here. How could you

ACE: We're gonna even the score with these guys, don't you worry. They're gonna pay. But like Sun Tzu told me, don't get angry and fight battles you aren't gonna win.

GARY: Sun Tzu? Didn't he live in ancient China?

BENNY: We're not from around here.

GARY: What's that thing doing to Mike's body?

BENNY: He's touching palms with it, that's what he's doing. He's trying to transfer the pentagram symbol. He's going to turn him into another one of his own kind.

ACE: Right! So anyone with one of them on their hand is the enemy.

BENNY: But if it's as easy as that, why isn't ex-Brian slapping high fives with everyone in sight?

DOCTOR: Because it takes a bit more than that to make a Scourge. The Demi-Leader would need a good half hour to achieve full infection.

ACE: Doctor, you scumbag! You've sold us out to the

DOCTOR: No need to bother, Ace. Brian's not paying any attention.

ACE: Every time I think I've got one over on you, Professor...

DOCTOR: Nine out of ten. I see I got here too late.

GARY: Why? Could you have stopped him doing this?

BENNY: You wait and see. He'll have saved the world before supper.

DOCTOR: Very possibly. That's the thing about the Scourge. They're so convinced of their own superiority that they don't bother to watch their backs, or listen behind their backs. They think their control over the humanoid nervous system makes them invulnerable, but it's actually their Achilles' heel.

GARY: You've encountered them before?

DOCTOR: Oh, we all have, in various ways. But my experience is of a practical kind. Now, here's the key to my room, number 666. I'll meet you there in fifteen minutes, after I call Brian in for his dinner. Now go on, get out of the way. Go on, shoo.

BENNY: Good luck, Doctor.

DOCTOR: Ah, Demi-Leader. Your Leader says to leave the human offal alone and to get along to the meeting. The focussing is about to begin. Time enough for more conversions later.

ORM: What business is it of yours, Time Lord?

DOCTOR: If you fail to achieve complete materialisation, then I won't earn my payment. Now, are you really going to ignore the orders of your Leader?

ORM: If you lie
DOCTOR: Trust me. I'm the Doctor.
ORM: Very well.

(Door unlocked and opened.)

ACE: Okay, it's empty. Everybody in, quickly.

(Door closed.)

GARY: That's terrible. All those people, they're just running around like they don't know who to turn to.

MICHAEL: There's nobody to turn to. I've never seen human panic like that. I feel as if I should try to find people I know, but you can't stop and talk to any of them. They're too frightened to do anything but run and hide. If only we could get out.

BENNY: I'll put the kettle on. Tea, as always, will help.

GARY: It's like, it's like those things are herding people about, keeping them scared. People like our attendees. Oh, I don't know how many of my friends have been killed. Poor Mike. Why are we sitting here having tea?

ACE: The Professor said fifteen minutes. It's only been fourteen, so shut it, okay?

GARY: Okay! Fine. What is it with her?

BENNY: She's as scared as we are, only she deals with it a bit differently. She bashes it.

MICHAEL: Let's see if we're on the news, if anyone's coming to help.

BENNY: You're not going to get a picture.

ACE: I've never heard interference like that before.

MICHAEL: Interference be damned. That's cosmic background radiation, the whispered echo of the Big Bang. There should be all sorts of radio sources out there louder than that. Terrestrial sources, other planets, the stars even.

BENNY: I take it we're a long way from the Home Counties.

MICHAEL: If we can hear that clearly, we're not even in the same universe. We'd be in a cosmos where, where there's nothing, where the fireball of the Big Bang expanded uniformly until it was just a fine spray of radiating gas.

ACE: So is that what the darkness outside was?

BENNY: Goodness, I think we'd better open the curtains.

(Curtains drawn.)

MICHAEL: My God. Absolute blackness. No stars, no galaxies, just darkness into infinity.

GARY: We're in space?

ACE: We can't be. The air pressure would have blown the windows out.

BENNY: And there's no sort of forcefield, or they wouldn't have had to lock the doors. We could open this window if we wanted to.

MICHAEL: But

ACE: Er

BENNY: Right. Bad idea.

ACE: So, if we're floating in empty space, why aren't we in free-fall?

MICHAEL: Perhaps, perhaps because here the difference between physical reality and perception is less than in our universe. There's been a lot of speculation that in high mathematical dimensions the link between mind and Space-Time would be of a different nature.

GARY: You mean we don't float about because someone doesn't want us to?

MICHAEL: Exactly.

BENNY: That's the most difficult thing I've had to get my head round for several weeks.

(Knocking on door.)

GARY: Can we be sure that's

BENNY: I don't think the monsters would bother knocking.

(Door opens.)

DOCTOR: Milk and two, please.

LEADER: Demi-Leader

ORM: Leader.

LEADER: You have done well to cause panic amongst the human food source, but now you must join us in the focussing. All is going to plan, but the plan must progress. The summoning of the Scourge must be completed.

ORM: I obey your will, Leader.

DOCTOR: It's one of the eternal mysteries of the universe. Why does tea made in an hotel bedroom taste worse than tea made under any other circumstances?

BENNY: That's what I like about you, Doctor. Your sense of priorities.

ACE: Yeah. How about letting us know what's going on?

DOCTOR: Oh, isn't it obvious?

BENNY + ACE: No!

DOCTOR: Oh, very well. No need to shout. The Scourge are parasites from another universe. They prey on the depression, doubt, and despair of lesser beings.

ACE: Hmm. Like a hyperspace version of Radiohead.

DOCTOR: They originate on a higher dimensional plane. While you know just the four dimensions, height, width, depth and age, they know eight.

MICHAEL: What are the others?

DOCTOR: Does a flat circle have any concept of height? The words the Scourge use wouldn't have any meaning to you.

MICHAEL: Doctor, we could look down on a world of flat circles and do almost anything we liked to them. Just how powerful are these creatures?

DOCTOR: If they achieve full materialisation, they'll be able to reach around walls, walk through Time like it was space, and reverse every decision, explore and conquer the interior of human thought. The only rational thing for humanity to do would be to worship them as gods. Gods of despair and horror.

BENNY: Are there any more secular options?

DOCTOR: Perhaps. The Scourge's nature leads the unwary into their territory. Dabblers in the mystic arts, those tripping over their own feet on the astral plane, they often chance across their tendrils. And of course, those who've fallen into their own depths of heartache.

ACE: So this lot have been preying on people for, well, forever.

DOCTOR: Yes. You could see the Scourge as a disease, symptoms of clinical depression. We've all felt their tendrils. When it's raining when it should be sunny, when we're alone and don't want to be, when civilisation and history seem just things left on a battlefield.

BENNY: I know what that's like.

DOCTOR: They came to be known as demons, the Archdukes of Hell, because the geometry of their realm suggests the inferno. They keep certain human souls there, those who failed to escape.

ACE: You said they control people's nervous systems, right?

DOCTOR: They're an index of human fear and desire. They've learned from the travellers they've chanced across to communicate at a level that human beings read as a religious impulse, a verbal zap across the temporal lobes.

GARY: Sorry?

DOCTOR: People tend to do exactly what they say, because their voices scare or awe them into submission, like a rabbit caught in the headlights of a car.

BENNY: So what are these holy terrors doing here? What do they want?

DOCTOR: They've taken this building out of three dimensional space to this fractional dimension halfway to their home. They're using the hotel, and the emotions and bodies of those inside, as a stepping-stone.

ACE: A stepping-stone towards what?

DOCTOR: Once they fully materialise inside this space as their complete multi-dimensional selves, then they'll move it back into human space. Back to Earth.

MICHAEL: Like inserting a virus into a cell, and introducing it into a host.

DOCTOR: Exactly.

BENNY: With hilarious results. So how can we stop them?

DOCTOR: Well, since the Scourge use human panic as a power source, I need to create a crescendo of fear at the height of their materialisation in about fifteen minutes

BENNY: Fifteen minutes? What can we do in that time?

DOCTOR: We could connect the ventilation system to a supply of advanced pacification gas timed to be vented into the building at the exact moment when they're attempting materialisation. We could then arrange for Doctor Pembroke's temporal engine to cut out at that exact moment, leaving the entire Scourge army between dimensions, ripped apart for millions of years, and certainly unable to attempt anything this silly ever again. We could do that.

MICHAEL: So why don't we?

DOCTOR: Because I've already done it. More tea?

BRIDGEHEAD: It is starting.

LEADER: We anticipate this feast. We will turn this universe into something like our own. We will cycle the terror of the humans, breed them for fear, use their emotions as an engine of pleasure and sustenance.

BRIDGEHEAD: We must join in the focus to allow the remainder of our army through the dimensional gap.

ORM: Where is the Time Lord? I do not trust him.

LEADER: He cannot harm us.

BRIDGEHEAD: Do we have the hyperdimensional biological adjustments that he required as his reward?

LEADER: We will not need them. He is to be our reward.

(Knocking on door.)

BRIDGEHEAD: A human.

LEADER: I summoned one to us for use in the focussing.

ORM: I will bring it to us.

(Door opens.)

ORM: Mary, listen. It's Brian. I'm fine, and so are you. You want to come inside now.

MARY: Oh, Brian, there you are. Thank heavens.

(Door closes.)

MARY: Brian? You're hurt. I couldn't find you. That woman told me to leave, and so I did, but I went everywhere and

BRIAN: Listen. I'm not hurt, Mary. These are my friends. You've nothing to fear. Come and join us.

MARY: You look, I can't quite see you properly. You all look a little strange. Is it the lighting? Oh, Miss Carpenter, I don't understand this at all. Are we, well, have we taken drugs?

ANNIE: Listen. We are opening a focus to bring a wonderful new world into being, to bring all of our friends to Earth.

MARY: Our friends? Like Orm?

BRIAN: Yes, just like Orm. And to help us, we need you to concentrate, Mary. Concentrate on the space between our hands.

MARY: Your hands? Oh, all right.

ANNIE: The space there seems to be stretching, doesn't it, Mary.

MARY: I'm getting spots in front of my eyes. Ow! It's like I'm getting a sun tan.

LEADER: The hard radiation produced by the adjustment of the quantum vacuum.

BRIAN: Normally that would kill you, Mary.

MARY: But why won't it now?

BRIAN: Look at the space. You see what's forming there?

(Crackling flames and distant screams.)

MARY: It's Hell. A vision of Hell!

ANNIE: Mary, you won't die here.

LEADER: Because that's where you're going!

(Mary screams.)

LEADER: Mmm, feast on her pain and fear, brothers. Feast on the energy of her everlasting death. The sacrifice is made. The point of focus approaches.

ACE: Oh, I don't think anyone's been in here since the place was built.

BENNY: You've got your foot on my head.

MICHAEL: I wouldn't like to mention where your foot is on me.

BENNY: You have to take the rough with the smooth. Not every building in the universe has nice big ventilation ducts for people to crawl through easily.

DOCTOR: Ah, there it is, up ahead. The canister of Pacificus, a riot control gas developed in the 23rd century.

BENNY: And you've wired it to an electricity meter?

DOCTOR: To an electromagnetic flux detector. And by the way, the needle's bouncing. Things downstairs are hotting up nicely.

ACE: So as soon as things get cosmic, the gas gets pumped into the ventilation system

BENNY: Everyone falls over and bang goes the Scourge's panic and terror.

DOCTOR: But that's not all. When the needle crosses the line, the meters send out a radio signal and, let's just go and check on that.

BRIDGEHEAD: A message from our army. All cohorts have abandoned their flesh bodies and are massing in hypertropic form on the edge of the reality interface.

LEADER: Good. Remain in contact. Tell them to proceed to the point of focus. The transfer is nearly upon us.

ORM: And then the ultimate victory of the Scourge will be assured.

(Electric spluttering.)

MICHAEL: Good Lord, it's still going.

DOCTOR: The Scourge have set it to keep running. But I'm afraid I meddled with the programming and added some modifications.

MICHAEL: What?

DOCTOR: Last night when you broke your journey at a little guest house, I popped in and opened up the box. Of course, this was several months ago in my own time line.

MICHAEL: What?

DOCTOR: Oh, don't worry. It was while you were treating the young lady – well, I assume it was a young lady – to dinner.

BENNY: Are you going to go for that third what again?

MICHAEL: I'd appreciate it if you all kept your noses out of my, my business.

DOCTOR: Isn't that wonderfully typical of humans? We're in another universe, trying to save our own, and

yet there are still certain things that one shouldn't talk about. Anyway, I hid a small receiver that awaits a transmission from the EM monitor. When it does, the machine will shut down and the Scourge will find themselves

ACE: Up the creek without a paddle?

DOCTOR: Precisely.

GARY: So they'll all vanish or something?

DOCTOR: The physical bodies will become human again.

GARY: When does it happen? I'm tired of sneaking through corridors.

BENNY: You should try doing it professionally.

DOCTOR: It should all start happening just about

(Machine starts to wind down.)

DOCTOR: Now.

LEADER: We are on the edge of focus.

BRIDGEHEAD: Our army reports they are advancing to the confluence of the universes.

LEADER: Great are the Scourge. Let all the universes sing our hymns of battle and conquest.

(Beeping.)

ACE: There it goes.

DOCTOR: No. Something's wrong.

BENNY: Isn't this the moment when it should all go (machine slows) click?

ACE: Doctor?

DOCTOR: My device didn't work.

(Rattling.)

DOCTOR: It's been removed.

GARY: I don't know about you, but I don't notice any of us fainting from pacification gas.

DOCTOR: The Scourge must have removed that too, emptied the canister. They've tricked me.

BENNY: Doctor, what's that on your hand?

ACE: It's that shape. The pentagram.

DOCTOR: It's the shadow of the Scourge.

BENNY: Tell me this is all part of the plan.

DOCTOR: Not any more. I took it on to make them feel secure. I thought they'd be banished before they could activate it, but now

ACE: It's glowing!

BENNY: Doctor, what does it mean? What's going to happen to you?

DOCTOR: It means

(Chitin cracks, the Doctor screams.)

ACE: It means this time the monster's going to win.

LEADER: Advance, soldiers of the Scourge. Advance through the focus and claim this world.

BRIDGEHEAD: Leader, the shadow on the Time Lord has been activated. I can feel it.

LEADER: I activated it.

BRIDGEHEAD: Why, Leader?

LEADER: He thought he had successfully betrayed us.

ORM: I did not trust these Time Lords.

LEADER: Neither did I, which is why I searched for his traps. Our success is now certain. And more than that, one of our soldiers will inhabit the body of a Time Lord, and feast to his delight on the Doctor's soul.

ORM: So we will conquer. We will dominate and feed.

LEADER: Yes, Demi-Leader, we will conquer. Observe. The army arrives.

BENNY: Doctor! He's having some sort of fit.

ACE: It's the transformation, he's trying to fight it.

MICHAEL: He's turning into a monster!

GARY: If he becomes one of those things, he'll kill us all. We have to get out of here.

BENNY: I am not leaving him.

GARY: Look, outside, it's light. It's turning into daylight.

BENNY: Which means we're materialising on Earth, that the Scourge are going to win.

ACE: Oh Benny, this is what we thought would never happen. The Doctor got it wrong. He played chess against these monsters and they beat him. We have to save ourselves.

DOCTOR: (in pain) Bernice, Ace, please help me.

[Part Three]

ACE: How can we help? Doctor, what can we do?

BENNY: Goddess, is he?

MICHAEL: He's not breathing.

ACE: That doesn't mean anything.

GARY: He's completely paralysed. His muscles are locked.

BENNY: His hearts have stopped. No. No, the one on the left's still beating, just really slowly.

MICHAEL: So he's in some sort of coma?

BENNY: Maybe he did it to protect us from the monster he was becoming.

GARY: Should we get him into the recovery position?

ACE: I think the extra arm would get in the way.

GARY: Hey, look outside.

BENNY: It's dark again. So we aren't back in our own universe.

MICHAEL: We must still be in the fractional dimension.

ACE: So the bad guys haven't won yet.

GARY: Oh, come on. This Doctor guy is out for the count, his plan fell apart, and we're supposed to

BENNY: Where there's life there's hope. He would have said that. You just remember it. The Scourge feed on despair, and we are not going to give into them, all right?

GARY: What *are* we going to do?

ACE: You're going to deafen me.

MICHAEL: What?

BENNY: Don't start that again.

ACE: Here's how you do it. Hold your hands like this.

GARY: Are you serious? I can't do that to you.

ACE: Look, Benny just yelled at you, right? She made you angry. So now we're gonna use that anger.

GARY: No. No, no, no, I can't.

ACE: Hands in the position. When I give the signal, you smack them hard on both my ears at once. Got to hit at the same moment.

BENNY: Dorothy McShane, are you absolutely certain about this?

ACE: These bugs control people through sound. If I can get close to one, maybe I can kill it before it realises I'm not such a soft touch. The Tardis infirmary can put my eardrums back together again after we win.

MICHAEL: But that's far beyond anything modern medicine could do.

ACE: It's okay, we're from the future. Go on then, Gary, give us a smile. Okay, that's close enough. Deep breath. When I drop my finger

BENNY: Oh, Goddess.

(Deep breath, thump, Ace cries out.)

ACE: Argh! Oh, that's in the top ten most painful things I've ever done.

GARY: I'm sorry, but you did ask me to

BENNY: You're bleeding.

ACE: What? Can't hear you, mate. Ah! So it worked, anyway.

BENNY: Have a tissue. You're one of the bravest people I've ever met, you know that?

ACE: What?

MICHAEL: Now she's doing it. I feel vindicated.

ACE: So which bug do we hunt?

BENNY: Annie.

ACE: Eh?

BENNY: The one with the

MICHAEL: You mean Annie Carpenter, the woman from the other conference? She's been changed too?

BENNY: It's catching.

ACE: Why are we after Annie?

BENNY: (loud and slow) I have a plan.

ACE: Okay. But you'd better have some kind of plan.

LEADER: I do not understand. We have searched the large open spaces of this building. Where is our army?

ORM: They were about to achieve materialisation.

BRIDGEHEAD: Something has gone wrong. We are still in the bridgehead dimension. I can sense a force, holding us in place.

LEADER: The Time Lord. He is using some unknown power source to frustrate us. Bridgehead, find him and destroy him. Demi-Leader, locate some humans for torture. Their fear and terror may induce the materialisation.

BRIDGEHEAD + ORM: Yes, Leader.

(Echoing place.)

DOCTOR: Hello? Where are you? Come on out. I can see you, over there, behind the mental construct of the mathematics of flight.

SCOURGE: Where is this place?

DOCTOR: This is the interior of my mind. A spacious, charming residence in a magnificent location, only a stone's throw from my kidneys.

SCOURGE: You must be the Time Lord.

DOCTOR: And you're the Scourge soldier who was due to take me over using the shadow your people planted on my hand. Sorry to spoil your plans.

SCOURGE: How is it that we are here?

DOCTOR: Oh, a bit of mental kung-fu. When you tried to take me over, I let you, then hopped in after you and slammed the door. Now neither of us is in charge of the body, and your people are a bit stuck. Being a group mind, if one of you gets trapped between universes, you all do.

SCOURGE: Your body will now have mutated into one of our forms.

DOCTOR: A small price to pay for the survival of Earth.

SCOURGE: It will not survive much longer, Doctor. This is only a delay. We will conquer the interior of your mind first, then go on to consume your favourite planet.

DOCTOR: As William Shakespeare once said to me, come and have a go if you think you're hard enough.

(Roar! The Doctor cries out.)

BENNY: Oh, why did they make the carpet of this hotel's corridors so rough that you can't haul a body along it? Actually, I think I may just have answered my own question.

GARY: For a little guy, he's really heavy.

BENNY: Maybe it's the extra arm.

MICHAEL: That's impossible. He can't gain mass in a moment.

BENNY: When we're out of this, I'll get you to have a look at my bathroom scales.

ACE: What?

BENNY: Nothing important.

ACE: I've had a look at this gas canister we took from the ventilation duct. I don't think the Scourge have got rid of all of it. There's still a bit left in here. Oi! Am I making sense? I can't hear myself speaking.

BENNY: You're fine, and there's no need to shout.

MICHAEL: Where are we taking the Doctor?

BENNY: To a hiding place. Here.

(Door opens.)

GARY: The caretaker's store room.

BENNY: Just somewhere that's out of the way of the Scourge. Now lower him gently. Okay. There.

(Door closes.)

ACE: I hope he's going to be all right.

BENNY: Oh, we'll make sure he (growling) Goddess!

ACE: Look, a Scourge! Right, I'll

BENNY: No, it's the wrong one. It hasn't got any er

ACE: Okay, so what do we do?

GARY: Shh. It hasn't seen us. It's looking up the stairwell. It's heading upstairs, to the accommodation levels where my friends are hiding. A lot of the staff are up there too.

BENNY: We can't help them now. We need to find Annie.

ACE: No, we need to find Annie! Come on, let's go hunting.

(Sound of water.)

BRIDGEHEAD: I can sense him. I can smell Time Lord. He exists across Time and disturbs the waves that wash through the universes.

(Door opens.)

ACE: (sotto) Hey, in here. I've found her. Down there beside the swimming pool. It looks like she's searching for something.

MICHAEL: Oh, my God, did that thing used to be Mrs Carpenter? She's walking in circles.

BENNY: The pool must be right above where the Doctor is. She's sniffing him out.

ACE: We need to get her up here into the office. It'll be easier in a confined space.

BENNY: Everybody, down below window level. Make sure she can't see us. Everybody ready? Okay. Go!

ACE: Oi! Insect face! I'm not afraid of you, bug! And here she comes, fast as all those legs can carry her.

MICHAEL: We're ready.

BRIDGEHEAD: Little human. Mammal scum. Self-hating morsel of semi-aware soul. You dare to defy the power of the Scourge?

ACE: You lot really need people to be afraid of you, don't you? Bet you own a pit-bull terrier.

BRIDGEHEAD: Listen. Use your fingernails to pluck out your eyes.

ACE: Sorry, can't hear a word. Argh! I've got her! I've got her mouth!

BENNY: Use the gas.

GARY: Which end of this thing is the

MICHAEL: Oh, give me that.

ACE: Put it in her face!

(Hissing of gas. The Bridgehead voice becomes Annie gasping.)

BENNY: Annie? Annie, is that you?

ANNIE: What happened? What's... Oh, my God. My arm. My, my face. Why am I seeing you all like that?

MICHAEL: I'm going to let go of you, Annie. Now don't panic. The gas is helping you not to get scared.

BENNY: Listen to me, Annie. We're in trouble, and I think that only you can help us. You have to stay calm. If you don't stay calm, well, let's not go into that.

MICHAEL: We've got about three more helpings of gas before it runs out.

BENNY: We're going to take you to see a friend of mine, and then we're going to find out what sort of psychic you really are.

(Screaming.)

ORM: Shudder, humans. Fear the Scourge. Fear us as you always have. You need us to define you. We are real, and you are our dreams. We feed on the pain of our dreams. Listen. Pick the weakest of you, and turn on them. Rip their limbs from their torso.

(Squelchy sounds and a man screaming.)

LEADER: Report, Demi-Leader.

ORM: I found these humans hiding in one of the rooms. They have shut themselves in all over this building, barricading the doors and hearing the screams of their fellows being tortured.

LEADER: Good. I can feel their fear. It is good you feel fear now, humans. This will prepare you for when your minds are conquered and your bodies invaded by our army. A fate you will come to enjoy, as you worship your despair and pain.

ORM: Oh, they flee. Shall I pursue them, Leader?

LEADER: No. Their fear is pleasurable, and sustains us in these forms. But we can only kill so many of them.

ORM: Perhaps we should give them time to breed?

LEADER: No. We are vulnerable while we remain stranded between the universes. I have detected a source of temporal energy on the roof of this building. Perhaps it is that which the Time Lord is using against us.

Destroy the mechanisms which the humans use to move against their gravity. Block any other paths. I will go to the roof to examine the energy source.

ORM: Yes, Leader.

(Clicking a light switch.)

GARY: The bulb's gone. Good choice of hiding place, this storeroom. Very dark.

BENNY: I left a torch on the shelf by the door. Ah, here we go.

ACE: This is our friend, Annie.

GARY: He only looks dead, we hope.

ANNIE: He looks ... is that how I look now?

MICHAEL: Stay calm, Annie. You have to stay calm. Don't think about what's happened to you. Everything's gonna be all right.

BENNY: The Doctor said that mystics encounter the Scourge, so you must have some kind of psychic ability. Or you're a manic depressive, in which case our goose is cooked.

ANNIE: I've never been honest enough to get depressed.

BENNY: Good. I want you to channel the Doctor.

ANNIE: But I don't know how. I made all that stuff up. Sure, when I was a girl I sort of knew what someone was like, but anything more than that was

BENNY: Put your hands on his forehead. Concentrate. If he can find a way to communicate, he will.

ANNIE: Okay. I don't know what this is all about. I don't know why

MICHAEL: Shh. Just concentrate.

GARY: Right now I wish I believed in the things you do, Annie.

ANNIE: Bernice? Ace?

BENNY: She can't hear you, Doctor.

DOCTOR [OC]: You have to tell her

ANNIE: Tell her

DOCTOR [OC]: Tell her to get to the Tardis. It's urgent. Go.

ANNIE: Get to the Tardis. Right. What does she have to do there?

DOCTOR [OC]: Can't fight them much longer. Can't move. Not enough energy. Can't talk for more than...

Bernice? You have to help me!

BENNY: How? How can I help you?

DOCTOR [OC]: You have to come inside.

BENNY: Oh dear. I understand, Doctor.

ACE: So what do I have to do?

BENNY: Write it down for her. Doctor Pembroke, you go with Ace to the Tardis. We'll keep in touch using Ace's combat radios. Here, give me one of them. Now, I'll find a way to communicate with Gary, and when he knows what you have to do, he'll let you know.

MICHAEL: So where exactly are you going, Benny?

BENNY: Inside, into the Doctor's mind.

GARY: How?

BENNY: I'm assuming a lot, aren't I? But he said it can be done, and back when all this started, the Doctor asked me to have faith. Annie, touch my forehead too. Oh, she's in a trance. Here, let me. One hand on me, the other on him. Go on, Doctor, show me what to do. Oh. Ah. (thud)

ACE: Oh great, that's two of our best players on the subs bench. Is she okay?

GARY: She's fine. Still breathing, even. More your usual sort of coma.

ANNIE: What's going on? What just happened? Where am I?

MICHAEL: It's hard to believe, but the Doctor just used your body to talk to us, and, oh, never mind. Here, have some more of this. (hiss of gas)

ACE: Come on then, Michael. We're gonna find a Tardis.

MICHAEL: If only I knew what one of those was. Gary, look after Annie.

(Benny falling with a cry and landing with a thump.)

BENNY: Oof, right on my coccyx.

DOCTOR: Hello. Welcome to my mind. Sorry about the mess.

BENNY: What are you doing up there?

DOCTOR: Hanging from a stray thought by one foot, what does it look like?

BENNY: It looks like a big echoy void with lots of rather tasteful furniture scattered about. Hey, Ace told me she'd come here once and from what she said it didn't look like this at all.

DOCTOR: It depends on the way you come in, the door you enter by. Some things change, some stay the same. Ah, I see you have company.

BENNY: You mean that lot standing by the little bridge? Who are they?

DOCTOR: My Jungian archetypes. You might call them my other selves, past and future. They only manifest themselves in times of dire emergency.

BENNY: Are they going to help us, then?

DOCTOR: No. They can't. I'm in charge of who I am, and they can't interfere in this battle, even if they think I'm doing a terrible job.

BENNY: And do they?

DOCTOR: Probably. Who knows? They turn their many noses up at me whenever we meet.

BENNY: Hmm, which one is he?

DOCTOR: Who?

BENNY: Him. The one with the hair.

DOCTOR: Oh, the eighth me. You haven't met him, yet.

BENNY: Not, er, planning to regenerate soon? Just asking.

DOCTOR: Bernice, if I lose this battle, I'll regenerate into a Scourge, and the Earth will be the first planet to fall while they take over the universe. Ogle my possibilities at a later date.

BENNY: Sorry. Let me help you down. Did you say something about a battle?

DOCTOR: Yes. Ah, it's how I got up there. I'm fighting the Scourge on the astral plane, metaphorically, as it were.

BENNY: How are you still alive?

DOCTOR: When they tried to infest me, I grabbed the soldier that hatched from the shadow and brought him into my mind. We've been locked in combat ever since. And since he's connected to the rest of the Scourge, they can't fully materialise in your universe until he defeats me. Of course, I can't do much either, apart from define the fractional dimension so that you've got air and gravity.

BENNY: We had those before you came in here.

DOCTOR: Time means nothing to the Scourge. Don't quibble. It's taking me all my mental energy just to hang on. Did Ace get my message?

BENNY: She knows she has to go to the Tardis, but she doesn't know what she has to do there.

DOCTOR: I didn't manage to tell her that?

BENNY: No.

DOCTOR: Oh no. That means we have to try again.

BENNY: Try what?

DOCTOR: To battle the monster for control, to try and make my mouth move. Professor, take my hand. This isn't going to be pleasant.

BENNY: You say that as if it has been so far.

DOCTOR: Relatively speaking, my dear Professor Summerfield, it has.

ACE: At least we made it to the lifts without running into the Scourge. Better not to try to go up in them. If these bugs have any sort of tactical awareness they'll be watching them.

MICHAEL: We could try the fire stairs. Over here. I got a full tour of the safety features when I made my booking. The stairwell! It's full of rock! But how?

ACE: Look out!

MICHAEL: Where did that come from?

ACE: It's concrete. Like they've taken a lump of it from the foundations and just shoved it up here.

MICHAEL: By reaching around Space and Time, like the Doctor said.

ACE: It's blocking the whole stairway. There's no way we're going to get past that.

MICHAEL: Looks like it's the lifts after all.

ACE: Looks like it's. Oh, you just said that, right?

BENNY: Big brain you have here. Goes on for miles. Nice high ceilings, too.

DOCTOR: I like to keep an open mind.

BENNY: Doctor, did you know that Annie was pregnant?

DOCTOR: No.

BENNY: It's just, I really don't want to see her hurt. Her or the baby.

DOCTOR: Indeed.

BENNY: Because, you see, it occurs to me that she's the focal point for all this. The link, the place where, if someone was going to put pressure on the situation to change it, to play it like a game of chess, she just seems to be in harm's way.

DOCTOR: Yes.

BENNY: Oh, will you give me a straight answer for once! Do you or do you not have a plan that's hiding underneath this plan? Are you going to turn around and say at the end of all this, I couldn't have told you, your reactions had to be the real thing. Which I've never believed, incidentally, because we've acted our socks off in front of you often enough. I just think you enjoy saving us all at the last minute, like you're the conjurer, with the rabbits and there's a hat of some kind.

DOCTOR: This situation would be the hat?

BENNY: My point exactly. So just tell me.

DOCTOR: No. This time the audience have seen through all the conjurer's tricks.

BENNY: And we're up to our necks in hat?

DOCTOR: Deep hat.

BENNY: Not feeling at all sheepish about that then? Bet you thought you could off-handedly wander in and duff up the Scourge with one hand tied behind your back. And that as a result of them being surprisingly more clever than you, you've quite possibly wiped out my entire history and species.

DOCTOR: Benny! The Scourge soldier is trying to undermine my sense of self. It feeds on doubt and guilt, so please

BENNY: Oh, oh, sorry. You're a really good person, and you're just having a bit of an off day. Goddess, what's that?

DOCTOR: That's the enemy, sitting across the gap between my left and right cerebral hemispheres.

BENNY: It's huge! Like a giant version of one of the Scourge.

DOCTOR: That's exactly what it is. A mental memory engram representing the full size the creatures like to attain when they've gained enough energy from human suffering.

BENNY: Are those limbs actually cutting into your brain?

DOCTOR: Yes. The Scourge soldier is gradually sapping my strength, using all its power to wind its tentacles deep into my mind. Soon I'll begin to exhibit the effects even in here. Then, the hotel, the Scourge army, will start to slide into your universe.

BENNY: Let's get a closer oh!

DOCTOR: Careful. Careful about the drop.

BENNY: What, what did I kick off the edge there?

DOCTOR: A small memory. The smell of a particular flower in a little garden hidden in the shadow of a church in the small Wiltshire village of Compton Bassett. I bent to pick the flower, I put it to my nose, and show-off as ever, I took a big comedy sniff of it to make my companion smile. Now it's gone.

BENNY: Oh, I'm sorry.

DOCTOR: It's all right. (sighs) It was just a meaningless little moment. Put enough of them back to back and you've got a meaningless life.

BENNY: Doctor. Doctor, that thing is opening its eyes, about half of them.

DOCTOR: It knows we're here. It can feel us. It knows it has to stop trying to bury into my psyche and fight me again.

SCOURGE: Doctor, you have been foolish enough to bring a human being into my presence.

BENNY: I like to think of it as the other way round. This is my presence, and you're in it.

SCOURGE: Such futile and obvious bravado.

BENNY: It's either that or sing a happy tune.

DOCTOR: Take my hand. We have to fight. (effort) No, I will not surrender to you. It's no use. It's showing me that myself is not myself. My sense of self is myself, myself is. What is myself?

BENNY: You're the Doctor. Keep remembering that.

DOCTOR: I forgot. Yes, yes, I think I knew him once, yes.

SCOURGE: Despite this, Doctor. Despite this the Scourge are becoming the masters of your mind.
(The word Self echoes.)

ACE: Right, so we've established there aren't any other ways up to the roof, unless you fancy opening a window and free-climbing in cosmic nothingness.

MICHAEL: Oh no. I got vertigo on the Harbour Bridge.

ACE: I guess that was a no. So, we're gonna have to try the lifts, even if it gives us away.

(Presses lift call button.)

ACE: Come on. Ah, they must have cut the power. We're gonna have to do this the hard way. Here, grab this.

MICHAEL: What is this thing?

ACE: What? Oh, right. It's a tool we use to pull the tops off Daleks. It unfolds like that. It's very strong. It's just the right shape for leverage. Now put the end in the gap between the lift doors, and you get behind me, and then we'll both

(Effort, creak, clunk.)

ACE: Ah, done it. Let me go first.

MICHAEL: Go?

ACE: Up the lift shaft. Come on. It'll be fun.

MICHAEL: Do you have a different definition of that word in the future?

GARY: I put Bernice in one of the staff bedrooms, locked it, then slid the key card under the door in case she comes round.

ANNIE: Great. I only wish we could move the Doctor so easily. He seems to have grown into the space here, like these new limbs want to cling onto things automatically. I can feel mine wanting to do that.

GARY: How is he?

ANNIE: He's not breathing, and I can't find any heartbeat. We must try and have faith.

GARY: Oh yeah, like you're an expert in that. A con artist who. Sorry. I was told to keep you calm.

ANNIE: I'm trying to be. I feel like I'm going to wake up and this will all have been a dream.

GARY: More like a nightmare. This was going to be a really good event. A great many of my friends are here and now they're all in hiding, all in danger.

ANNIE: Every time I move, I get reminded that I've (sigh) changed. It's like when you get back from the dentist and everything in your mouth is new, only it's my whole body. This is going to change back, right? I am going to be okay?

GARY: Of course you are. The Doctor's got the power to change himself back, and you as well.

ANNIE: Only I, I think he's dead. And if he's dead, then

(Chitin cracks.)

ANNIE: Oh, dear God, no. I'm changing again. It's growing. It's not my arm. It's not. (cries)

GARY: Annie, we're out of gas. Isn't there anything you can do to calm yourself? Some sort of relaxation chant?

ANNIE: Oh, what's the point? What's the point? I'm just gonna keep changing. I'm gonna lose me in this monster because I'm a fraud. I deserve this. So did you.

GARY: How did you know?

ANNIE: The Scourge inside me knows. It knows about all of us.

GARY: I fiddled the accounts. I took a cut of the registration money. Two thousand pounds.

ANNIE: Yeah, that makes sense. Doesn't it look just right to you? Three groups of desperate people. The losers I feed off, losers like you people whose biggest thrill is making a portrait of the Queen out of thread, and the losers Michael wanted to feed off, dreaming of time travel and the cash they were going to make.

GARY: Michael?

ANNIE: Doctor Pembroke. We've all been set up, right from the start. Ah!

(More chitin sounds.)

BRIDGEHEAD: Human, I am returning. I am taking back this body.

MICHAEL: How much further up this lift shaft are you intending to drag us?

ACE: What?

MICHAEL: How much?

ACE: Oh, we just have to get up a few more floors. It did look like that lump of concrete went up all the way.

MICHAEL: That's good, because (growl) Ace, look down.

ACE: What?

MICHAEL: Look!

ACE: Oh, it must have been on guard, checking out the lift shaft, waiting to see if we'd go for this. Come on!

ORM: You will die in agony, and serve us in Hell.

BENNY: Doctor.

DOCTOR: You try and save them all Doctor. You're like the arsonist who starts a fire to rescue people, to be a hero. This is the only kind of love you get, the love of species, or so you think.

BENNY: Doctor, is that you or the Scourge?

SCOURGE: Soon there will be no difference.

DOCTOR: (gabbling) But they don't love you. They fear you. They turn to you, they deny you your home because of theirs, because when you visit you bring the monsters! You'll never be able to go home to them now.

BENNY: Don't say that. Don't say that. Listen to yourself. What you're saying is insane.

(The Doctor cries out.)

BRIDGEHEAD: This body is mine. This flesh has become my flesh. Now I will destroy you.

GARY: No! Keep back.

BRIDGEHEAD: Listen, Gary.

GARY: I'm listening, damn you.

BRIDGEHEAD: You will let of me.

GARY: I, I can't help myself. Annie. Annie, listen to me. I know you're still somewhere in there.

BRIDGEHEAD: Listen. Be silent.

GARY: I, I

BRIDGEHEAD: I have learnt a lot about human bodies. Take yourself by the throat with both hands. Put your thumbs on your carotid artery and jugular vein, and squeeze. It would not normally be possible for a human to kill themselves in this manner. Primitive reactions take over and prevent self-destruction. But now, you are so weak and so guilty, I can feel in your mind that you know you deserve this. You and Annie, and Doctor Pembroke.

GARY: Doctor

BRIDGEHEAD: Don't worry, I won't harm him now. He is nearly ours. I can smell the sweetness of his despair. Perhaps before you die you will meet another of us. You may have the honour of being food for the emergent soldier. While I hunt your friends, consider yourself to be part of the great oncoming glory.

(Door opens and closes. Gary keeps gurgling.)

ACE: If we can just get this door open.

MICHAEL: I've got it. Heave!

(Lift door opens.)

MICHAEL: It's right behind us.

ACE: Up these stairs. They'll get us to the roof.

(Crash.)

MICHAEL: My God, the nothingness.

ACE: Forget the sky. Use this to fasten the door. Help me!

MICHAEL: That won't hold him for long.

ACE: That won't hold him for long, but it doesn't need to. That's what we're after, over there. Come on!

(Running.)

MICHAEL: A police box?

ACE: Key. Where did I put the key?

MICHAEL: Ace, look out! Behind the police box!

LEADER: Poor humans. So impotent in the face of the inevitable. Kneel! Bow your heads to me and I will allow you a simple death.

DOCTOR: I can't go on. I can't keep living a lie. Game over, Bernice. Game over. It's time for the reset button.

BENNY: Doctor, keep back from the edge.

DOCTOR: Time for me to rest.

BENNY: Will you stop struggling! You'll send us both over.

DOCTOR: You said you liked who I'll become.

BENNY: I don't want to meet him yet. I don't want to lose you.

DOCTOR: Please come with me, Benny. The darkness down there. The darkness at the heart of my own mind.

BENNY: You can't give into it, Doctor. You're loved by millions of people, people you never meet. You haven't told us what Ace needs to know. You cannot give up!

DOCTOR: But I have to. Goodbye, Bernice. (falling) Don't forget me!

BENNY: No, Doctor!

[Part Four]

MICHAEL: Ace, never mind that one. Here comes the one who was chasing us.

ACE: I see it. You don't have to grab my head and point me at it. (sotto) I'm ready.

ORM: So, two humans for us to play with. What shall we do with them, Leader?

LEADER: Anything we like. I have just felt the Doctor inside my consciousness. I felt him join our ranks.

ORM: And the Bridgehead is within us again also. She tells me she has left the Time Lord to live. She sensed his soul was soon to be ours.

LEADER: A fine new soul for the Scourge. We shall enjoy tormenting him.

ACE: (sotto) What are they saying?

MICHAEL: Too complicated.

LEADER: Listen. Come closer.

ACE: I guess that's a come over here gesture.

MICHAEL: Don't, Ace.

ACE: Oh no, I'm in its power. I can't help it.

LEADER: Listen. Take that edged weapon from your belt.

ACE: What are you pointing at? You want me to show you my knife? Like this?

LEADER: Now listen!

ACE: I don't know what you want, but I know exactly what I want to do with it. This!

(Thud, squelch.)

ORM: Leader!

ACE: Do you want some as well?

(Ticking sound.)

BENNY: No. Doctor, no. Don't jump. Don't (gasp, wakes) Goddess. Where am I? A hotel room. A hotel. The Doctor!

ORM: Grr. The human woman cannot hear us.

MICHAEL: Ace, keep away from him.

ACE: You're not going to go for it, are you, Brian. You're more worried about what I did to your leader.

LEADER: She has merely wounded me. Listen. You, the male human. Demi-Leader, direct him.

MICHAEL: I'm not listening to you.

ORM: Listen. Take the female and throw her off the building.

ACE: Hey, Michael! What are you? No! No!

BENNY: Gary, where's?

(Gary is still choking himself.)

BENNY: What are you doing?

GARY: Help me. I can't stop myself.

BENNY: Huh, I can.

(Thump, thud.)

(Orm laughs.)

LEADER: We have her, Demi-Leader. Her friend is going to kill her. Is her panic not delicious?

ORM: She's considering falling into the darkness. Her little mammal brain is trying to encompass the idea, but her body is rebelling. Oh, this is fine food.

ACE: Stop! Let go of me! You're taking us towards the edge!

MICHAEL: I'm so sorry. I can't stop myself. Maybe it's for the best. But I mustn't take you with me, I mustn't.

ACE: I can't hear you, but I don't like that look on your face, mate. You don't deserve to die.

MICHAEL: Yes, I do.

ACE: You're worried because you meddled with time travel and all that stuff? Well, we discover all of it later, and the Doctor meddles everywhere.

MICHAEL: No, I mean. Oh God, I'm glad you can't hear this. I mean I deserve to die because of my, my wife.

ACE: Your wife? Oh, it's pretty easy to lip read when someone's got their hands around your throat. Oh great, you think this is one of those horror stories where you have sex and get killed.

MICHAEL: Or steal the petty cash and get killed, or fleece loads of gullible fools and

ACE: No. No, no, couldn't read that bit.

MICHAEL: Gary stole the money. The Scourge knows. The Scourge is telling us all about each other, about how limited we are, how futile our lives are.

ACE: Look out! The edge!

MICHAEL: I can't hold back for much longer. You're gonna have to knock me out or something before we

both go over.

ACE: I can't stop you doing this. You're stronger than me now.

MICHAEL: It's the Scourge, they're inside us. They're going to take us both. As soon as we go over, we'll be theirs.

ACE: Theirs. Ah, is that what you're saying. No, no, we won't be. They're not gonna have us. Listen. Listen! You have to get this. I've been under fire. I've been threatened with death loads of times. And I know that quite often lots of people get killed who don't deserve it at all. You don't deserve what's happening to you.

LEADER: We tire with this dance, meat puppets. It is time for you to leap in despair and become ours in the void.

MICHAEL: I'm sorry. I have to throw us over now. I'll argh.

ACE: What's happening? Why are you looking like that?

DOCTOR [OC]: Because, Ace, I've just taken charge of Doctor Pembroke's brain. Follow me. We'll take the pretty way back to the Tardis. Stay on the edge of the roof and step round the back. Now, come on, totter. Struggle. Act like you're fighting me off.

ACE: Professor? How are you doing this? And how come I can hear you?

DOCTOR [OC]: I'm beaming my thoughts straight at you, through Doctor Pembroke. Sorry it took such a long time to tune in. Just getting used to the way the Scourge do things.

ACE: Where are you?

DOCTOR [OC]: I'm with the Scourge, nestled up amongst their group soul, in the deepest part of my brain. I had to sacrifice myself to get there, to use their own power against them. Had to trust that there was something to catch me at the end of my fall, something bigger than myself.

ACE: So what did you find? Doctor?

DOCTOR [OC]: It is an astonishing viewpoint, Ace, seeing through the eyes of a Scourge soldier, for the sheer power, the freedom to travel all over Space and Time in a moment. The Scourge aren't egotistical and fallible like I am. They don't depend on the love of their friends to save them when they fall.

ACE: Doctor

DOCTOR [OC]: When they tell someone to listen, I can fight my way to the surface of our group mind and make sure it's me they listen to. Ah, here we are, by the Tardis door again. The key's in your right jacket pocket. Ready? One, two

ACE: Three!

(Tardis door opens.)

ORM: What are they

LEADER: Stop them!

(Tardis door closes.)

MICHAEL: What? Where are we?

ACE: Inside that police box.

MICHAEL: But that would mean it's bigger on

ACE: Yeah, don't say it. Hey! I can hear you, for real. And you're you again. Oh, which leaves us up the creek, again.

MICHAEL: What?

ACE: Just try and keep up, okay? Lend me your ear, mate. Professor! Are you in there?

MICHAEL: Oh, is he likely to be inside my

DOCTOR [OC]: Yes, Ace. I was distracted for a moment. The gap between dimensions.

ACE: Why are my ears fixed?

DOCTOR [OC]: Oh, because before we got here I set the Tardis medical controls to focus their nanites on the console room.

ACE: So you thought we might not get out of this unscathed.

DOCTOR [OC]: I knew I had the shadow of the Scourge on my hand. This was insurance. But the Scourge were ahead of me. They made my infected form grow, they made it heavy, they blocked the way to the Tardis.

ACE: But you're playing them again now, right?

DOCTOR [OC]: I'm one of them, but by the tip of my fingers I'm hanging on to this game. We have to use the gaps between dimensions. Go to the console.

ACE: Come on, you. Come over here. The Doctor's gonna use your fingers to point at things.

DOCTOR [OC]: You have to rip out the safety catches on the dimensional interface. At the moment I'm inside the Scourge consciousness. The Scourge are inside me. We're all inside the building, and the building is inside the fractional dimension, which is also inside the Scourge's consciousness, like two Russian dolls trying to eat each other. Clear?

ACE: Er, completely.

DOCTOR [OC]: We're going to make all that bigger on the inside than the outside, mix it all up.

ACE: And will that save the world?

DOCTOR [OC]: Oh no. Then saving the world will be up to us.

(Slapping.)

BENNY: Gary, wake up.

GARY: What? Oh, oh, my neck. Thank you.

BENNY: You're not still keen on auto-asphyxiation, are you?

GARY: No. No, I'm fine.

BENNY: Where's Annie?

GARY: She left me here to die.

BENNY: She left the Doctor's body here too, unharmed, which is really bad news.

GARY: Why?

BENNY: Because she must think that the Scourge have got him now. She doesn't want to harm one of her own.

GARY: So where's she gone?

BENNY: To do what the Scourge do best, terrorise people. Come on!

BRIDGEHEAD: Listen. You, come here. Come here to my jaws and die.

(Man screaming, nasty ripping sound.)

BRIDGEHEAD: This is all you can expect from your existences now. An eternity of pain, for now and always. The Time Lord is ours. The rule of the Scourge is beginning. This place will finally open like the door it was always meant to be, and take us to your Earth. Pitiful humans, who can save you now? What is, what is happening?

BENNY: Hey! You, leave these people.

GARY: What's that sound? What's going on?

BENNY: It feels like Space-Time thingummyjigs, like the mother of all rollercoasters.

(The Tardis materialises.)

BENNY: Oh, right.

GARY: What is that thing?

BENNY: We call it the Tardis.

GARY: Whatever it is, Annie doesn't like it landing. Excellent! It's knocked her out.

(Tardis door opens.)

ACE: Hiya. It's just us.

GARY: Ace, Doctor Pembroke.

MICHAEL: But how did we get

DOCTOR [OC]: Bernice, while Annie's unconscious, get her inside the Tardis.

BENNY: So the Doctor's alive. And he's using Doctor Pembroke like a ventriloquist's dummy?

ACE: It's been emotional.

DOCTOR [OC]: We have to get Annie inside the Tardis and get everyone else out of here. The two Scourge on the roof will have been knocked out by my dimensional fiddling, but as soon as they wake up they'll sense the movement of the Tardis and follow us.

GARY: Come on. Everybody, get out of here.

ACE: Right. Help me get Annie inside.

ACE: So, couldn't we just drag everybody in here and dematerialise? Get back to Earth and leave the Scourge in the hotel?

DOCTOR [OC]: We couldn't escape the fractional dimension. We and the Scourge are wrapped around each other, trapped and knotted together.

ANNIE: Oh, what? Where?

DOCTOR [OC]: Annie, wake up. We need you awake.

ACE: She hasn't changed physically. So much for your medical insurance.

DOCTOR [OC]: She hasn't got the body of a Time Lord.

ANNIE: Oh, why am I okay again?

DOCTOR [OC]: The temporal grace of the Tardis interior. The old girl's sense of calm, as well as the nanites. Mentally, you're your old self, at least for the next few hours.

GARY: More than we can say for you.

BENNY: So okay, we can't take the people home. Why don't we just haul all of the Scourge into the Tardis, make them wake up?

DOCTOR [OC]: They need to be unconscious first. The conscious Scourge would have its defences up, and now that one of them has been disconnected from the Scourge consciousness, we'll, I mean they, no we'll, I mean they'll know what to expect.

ACE: Stop getting you and the Scourge mixed up. That's well scary

DOCTOR [OC]: It's just so tempting. The Scourge are all-powerful, and I'm just a pitiful child doing tricks to attract the attention of my friends, trying to buy their love.

BENNY: Doctor, stop it.

DOCTOR [OC]: Hmm?

BENNY: We need your help. Why have you done all this? What are you planning?

DOCTOR [OC]: For once, I'm making it up as I go along. Bernice, concentrate for a moment. Examine the contents of your mind. You can feel the Scourge there now, can't you?

BENNY: Oh Goddess, yes. That's terrible. Why have you done that to me?

ACE: Me too. Doctor.

GARY: I feel it now. The weight of it, all the things I've

BENNY: He's done it to all of us.

ACE: Have you really sold us out, then? Have you surrendered to the Scourge?

DOCTOR [OC]: No, Ace! Have a little faith. I haven't surrendered, I've put us all in the same dimension, on the same playing field. The Scourge are us, we are the Scourge.

BENNY: I get it. They can't tell us to listen anymore. We're as strong as they are. Even if some of us are still er changed.

DOCTOR [OC]: You all have to get everyone together in the foyer. Wait there for the Scourge to arrive. You'll be able to fight them. I know you can beat them.

BENNY: What about you?

DOCTOR [OC]: I have my own battle to fight. If I lose it, at least now the rest of you will be safe, providing you win your war. I'll see you on the other side of all of this. Now Doctor Pembroke can have his

MICHAEL: Body back. Well, come on, you lot. Everyone get down to the foyer.

(Tardis doors open.)

ACE: Come on, Benny. You heard what the Doctor said. The foyer.

BENNY: I'm not going. I've decided there's something I have to do. Annie, come with me. I'm going to need your help again.

ANNIE: Sure, but shouldn't

BENNY: No buts. Ace, you're just going to have to trust me.

ACE: You're going to try and help the Doctor, aren't you?

BENNY: I have to. Somebody's got to look out for him.

ACE: It should be me!

BENNY: But we know you're the best chance to get this lot out alive.

ACE: You just make sure you get back in one piece too.

BENNY: I'll try. Annie, come on.

ORM: Leader, are you

LEADER: I am whole, Demi-Leader. I am recovering.

ORM: What just occurred?

LEADER: The nature of this dimension has changed. We are, we and the humans are both inside it. We cannot reach around it, or through it. We have no connection backwards or forwards in what the humans call Time.

ORM: One of us has been exorcised. Leader, the Bridgehead has been destroyed.

LEADER: I feel her loss also.

ORM: It is like losing our senses. I feel lost, imprisoned. We cannot fight them like this.

LEADER: Our physical forms are still stronger than these humans. We are still what they dread in dreams. We can still will them to surrender their bodies to us.

ORM: Yes, Leader. I will follow where you auger. The time craft is on one level of this building, but the humans have gathered on another.

LEADER: Then we shall go and remind them who their masters are. When we have triumphed, we will alter the nature of this cosmos, and restore our power within it. This universe will still be ours!

BENNY: Here he is. Annie, I need you to put me back in the Doctor's head.

ANNIE: You two must be really close for you to risk the Scourge for him.

BENNY: He's my best friend. I won't leave him behind.

ANNIE: I wish I had someone to feel about me.

BENNY: When you tell your chap that he's a father, then you'll know. Now come on, help me do this. When you've linked us, get back to the foyer. They'll need you for the battle.

DOCTOR: Let go of me! I will return to my own form. I will help my friends.

SCOURGE: Stay with us. Share our power. In your world you are an attention-seeking child, striving to gain attention. You tell everyone you are a rebel, but you crave one-ness so much that you're lost when you're alone.

DOCTOR: And I'm forever testing my companions, forcing them away from me to see if they'll do what I always expect them to do, and leave. I know that.

BENNY: (distant) Doctor, Doctor, you (screams) Oh. Ow. And I was trying to climb down here quietly.

DOCTOR: Bernice, what are you doing here? I told you to

BENNY: Go away and leave you? And you expected me to do that?

DOCTOR: Point taken.

BENNY: I got Annie to put me back in your head. As I was saying before I lost my grip, maybe all this stuff is true, but listening to it like the Scourge wants you to?

SCOURGE: There is another human here. She is false upon false. She puts on a front and is never true. She could never ask for help with all the pain she hides, because that might exclude her from the society she craves. She

BENNY: Oh will you please just shut up. Doctor, fear will stop you doing anything, but love can stop the fear. Take my hand. We're getting out of here.

DOCTOR: Yes. Yes, I think we are.

(Scourge growls.)

BENNY: Doctor. Doctor, it's got me!

DOCTOR: Bernice!

GARY: Where are they? They should be here by now.

ACE: Hold on, Gary. You just keep your bunch holding the line. Doctor Pembroke's got his delegates ready, and Annie's back. She's preparing her lot.

GARY: But I can feel it in my head. It's whispering to me. It says these people aren't my bunch because, because I stole from them. I can't lead them. I keep thinking of Lisa, my wife. I never had the courage to go with my heart and finally leave her, let her heal.

ANNIE: You have got the courage. It just took you a while to find it. My Scourge keeps telling me that I was a fantasist who made things up to get people to listen to her. But you know what?

ACE: What?

ANNIE: I'm not a fantasist. I really am a psychic, because I kicked their alien arse.

GARY: What's your Scourge saying to you?

ACE: Just that I'm not happy with bashing heads together all the time. That I'd like to have a real life. But I knew that already, and it won't stop me doing a bit more of that today. Here they come. Everybody, stay down behind the chairs until they get closer.

BENNY: Doctor, get out of here. Go and save the others.

DOCTOR: You didn't leave me, Bernice. I'm not going to leave you. Concentrate. You've linked your mind with mine. Force the Scourge to let go.

BENNY: Let go.

DOCTOR: Let go!

BENNY: Doctor, it isn't responding. It, it's too strong.

DOCTOR: Bernice, this creature thrives on human despair. What's the opposite of despair? What can we do to defeat it?

BENNY: We can have hope, and we can trust our friends, and we can ask for our trespasses to be forgiven.

DOCTOR: And what makes you think of good things like those?

BENNY: A big party where everybody's happy, and being in bed with someone you love. A houseful of sleeping guests.

DOCTOR: The slope of green downlands, a picnic where you fall asleep half in the shade and half in the sunshine.

BENNY: When the whole day just goes by in talking and dozing.

DOCTOR: And do you think your actions are meaningless? Do you think there's no point to life unless you're building things or writing things or having children? Do you think it's all over when you've done that?

BENNY: I don't even think we come back or go to heaven or anything.

DOCTOR: And is that a weakness? Tell me!

BENNY: No. I think happiness with those we love means everything. I think these creatures are preying on the flaw that's humans being stupid and not trusting to their own strength, and not being able to say they need help, and it would be all okay if we could all just get our hands on some tea and scones, because those things are great.

DOCTOR: Yes! Yes, they are! The good things in life. That's what we can use against them. It's easing its grip.

BENNY: Listen you, Annie is having a baby. An entire new life. An absolute blank hope for the future. It's inside her, it's part of her. You can't corrupt that. You can't make it despair. You can't make us despair while there's still hope like that in the world.

DOCTOR: It's letting go! Come on, heave!

BENNY: It's got me. Doctor, grab my hand.

DOCTOR: Pull!

BENNY: I've got you.

SCOURGE: I will win. We must win.

DOCTOR: Be quiet. You're nothing, if we say you're nothing. Come on, Bernice, leave this thing to its despair. We have a world to save.

LEADER: Look at you, small humans hiding behind whatever they can find. You are devoted to trivia, interested only in creating items which you do not even have the bravery to call art. What worth are you? What have you found in these baubles that makes you worthy of survival?

GARY: We're standing up to you, for a start.

LEADER: Because you think we're like the fictional monsters your writers have created. But those are single human failings dressed up, ready to be defeated. We are human failure. We live in the gap between what you are and you could be. We have been parasites on your kind since the first Australopithecine became conscious. In one instant that beast was aware of her own self, and in the next she doubted she deserved the happiness she experienced at that awareness. You belong to us. The multiverse was organised this way, so that you would be our food.

GARY: We won't let you win. We can feel you in our minds. Stand up.

ACE: Come on, all of you.

GARY: We're ready to take you on.

LEADER: Are you? You, who stand up and think you can lead these humans? You have

GARY: Stolen from them. Yes, I stole from all of you. I took two thousand pounds from the convention.

MICHAEL And I've lied, too, and betrayed my wife.

ANNIE: And I've been taking New Agers for a ride for over a decade. But you know what? We're only human.

ACE: This lot have been waiting all their lives for a chance to do this, what I get to do all the time. To face our monsters. Right, Gary?

GARY: Yeah. Debt or drugs or all sorts of bad stuff, but we all know it's easier to fight one of you lot than those. These are my friends, the best people in the world, and you killed our mate. So you do what you want. None of us are going to back down.

ACE: Get out of our heads! Get out of our world!

ALL: Get out of our heads! Get out of our world! (continues under)

ORM: No, I cannot.

BRIAN: Oh, this thing on my hand, it's fading.

ORM: Oh, we are being expelled from this dimension.

LEADER: Attack them directly. Feed on their fear.

ORM: I can taste their despair. It rises out of them.

LEADER: This is what will happen to you all soon, humans. Death is coming.

ACE: For you and all. Argh! Take that!

(Fighting.)

GARY: She hurt him. See? She drew blood from his arms. We can beat them! They're not

ACE: Argh!

GARY: Invulnerable.

ANNIE: Ace. Oh, my God. He's got her.

LEADER: Now you will watch as I take this human apart, organ by organ, and your fear will take us to your Earth, where we shall feed.

ACE: Go on, then. Do it. I'm not afraid of you.

GARY: Ace! Do I tell them to look or not to look?

MICHAEL: It doesn't matter. It's all over. We got what we deserved.

ANNIE: But it can't end like this. It just can't!

(The lift arrives.)

LIFT: Doors opening.

DOCTOR: Ah, there you are. Leader, Demi-Leader. Ace.

ACE: Professor! Benny!

BENNY: Isn't the Leader a bit heavy, lying on top of you like that?

ACE: He could do with losing a few pounds.

LEADER: Grr, the Time Lord. You still wear one of our bodies.

DOCTOR: Yes, I'm thinking of keeping it. The extra limbs come in a bit handy.

LEADER: It is good you are here. We can feed on your fear also. You can witness my dissection of your companion.

DOCTOR: Oh, but I'm not scared.

LEADER: After all that has happened to you?

DOCTOR: Because of all that's happened to me. Bernice sorted it all out for me.

LEADER: You dare smile at us?

DOCTOR: You see, I set myself up as a slayer of monsters, someone who battles with demons. And to do that, one needs a certain authority. What gives me the right to walk into situations like this and juggle with the fate of planets? Who gives me permission to stand up?

LEADER: Who does?

DOCTOR: My friends do. You putting me through all this soul-searching only served to remind me of that, and of something else. That I'm the Doctor. You said you read many texts concerning me, that the central feature of them was my desire for freedom. Surely you noticed something else?

LEADER: What?

DOCTOR: That I always beat the monsters.

ACE: He does, too.

BENNY: Even when they're inside his head.

DOCTOR: And now, here I am, just when you've got victory in your grasp, wandering about in front of you without a care in the universe. Obviously I have something up my sleeve. Obviously you're unaware of the trap I've lured you into. I'm what monsters like you are afraid of, so tell me, are you getting scared yet?

LEADER: The Scourge are fear. You cannot scare us.

DOCTOR: Doctor Pembroke, did you know that Annie was pregnant?

MICHAEL: What? Why, Annie, is this true?

ANNIE: Michael, I was going to tell you.

DOCTOR: And how do you feel about this, Doctor Pembroke?

MICHAEL: I feel, I feel absolutely wonderful about it. Amongst all this destruction, you and I, Annie.

ANNIE: You mean, it's okay?

MICHAEL: I mean I'm damned if I'm going to die now, not when I'm going to become a father.

ACE: So those two are

BENNY: They say opposites attract, and the Doctor noticed that.

ACE: He just keeps on surprising you.

DOCTOR: Do you see now, Brian? Do you see the other side of what humans are like? Does this move you at all?

ORM: I am not

BRIAN: I am human.

ORM: No! No, you cannot.

BRIAN: Oh, help me. Get this thing out of my head.

DOCTOR: Your army is losing its grip, Leader. You can abandon your invasion, abandon these bodies. Let the Scourge consciousness retreat back to your own dimension, or

LEADER: Or?

DOCTOR: Or suffer the consequences.

LEADER: We mock your arrogance, Time Lord. We shall consume you, after I have ripped apart this woman, and her.

ANNIE: No!

MICHAEL: Don't you

ACE: Doctor!

DOCTOR: Listen! Leader, you can't move.

LEADER: You cannot. But I cannot. How?

DOCTOR: We're the Scourge, the Scourge are us. And that means we can tell the Scourge what to do. Listen. Demi-Leader, you are Brian Hughes, director of Hughes Aviation.

ORM: No! I will not, will not.

DOCTOR: Your wife is dead. Many innocent people are dead. But none of it was your fault. You have no guilt, no fear, no anger. It's a quiet night at home. The owls are calling outside your window. Be at peace, and let the Scourge be gone.

ORM: No! No. This will not. Argh!

BRIAN: Oh, why, why do I look like this?

LEADER: What have you done to him?

DOCTOR: I've freed him. Now you are the last fingertip of the Scourge consciousness desperately hanging on in this dimension. You can still retreat. You can still get home. Or I can make you let go and be spread across the dimensional rift for millennia.

LEADER: I will kill

DOCTOR: Listen. You've done enough harm. Let go.

LEADER: No. No. I will return, Time Lord, and then...

DOCTOR: That's all we were afraid of, a poor old man who died alone. Isn't it odd, the things we see in the dark?

ANNIE: I can't feel the Scourge in my head anymore.

DOCTOR: But it'll always be there, in everyone, just like it always has been. The important thing is not to listen to it.

ANNIE: Hey, my eyes, my skin. I'm back to normal!

BRIAN: So am I.

DOCTOR: Ah, and so am I. And yes, I think I prefer this old model. I'm not quite ready for a trade-in, whatever Bernice thinks.

BENNY: That's really not fair. I just thought he was

GARY: Look, outside the window. Sunlight.

MICHAEL: We're back in our own universe. We made it home!

(Cheers and applause.)

DOCTOR: The Scourge has been defeated, as I planned all along.

BENNY: Oh, really.

ACE: Professor.

DOCTOR: Oh, all right. The Scourge has been defeated because I'm very lucky to have such good friends.

ACE: Isn't it amazing how quickly things get back to normal?

BENNY: Almost as soon as one gets back to one's own universe.

DOCTOR: Be careful with his head. That's a nasty cut. There's a possibility of infection.

BENNY: Doctor, I think the ambulance people know their jobs.

DOCTOR: I suppose so, but there are so many small injuries, and I'd hoped to avoid bloodshed.

ACE: These people owe their lives to you, Professor.

DOCTOR: I didn't save Mary, nor Mike.

ACE: That wasn't your fault. There are always casualties.

BENNY: They're saying that while we were gone, the hotel just vanished. There was a big hole where the foundations were, and a police cordon, which is just as well when we reappeared.

DOCTOR: They'll forget it ever happened. They always do.

BRIAN: Doctor, I've been hearing about what happened, about what I did. To you and to Mary.

DOCTOR: Then remember that that wasn't you. The Scourge will return when the guilt of humans allows them to. Don't make it easy for them.

BRIAN: How can I do anything but feel guilty? That was my Mary. (sigh) My life is over.

DOCTOR: I will meet you in ten years' time, Brian Hughes, and then I'll remind you and your new wife of this conversation.

BRIAN: I don't believe you.

DOCTOR: You don't have to. You've got an appointment with the Doctor. Now, go home.

BRIAN: All right. What else is there to do?

BENNY: Is that true, Doctor? Do you meet him in ten years?

DOCTOR: We'll see, on our next trip to Earth.

ACE: So you don't know?

DOCTOR: I have faith. Time heals all ills.

MICHAEL: We're off too, Doctor. I have to get home to see my wife, to tell her about Annie and I. To start the divorce proceedings.

ANNIE: We're going to set up a house together.

BENNY: You two really managed to keep this quiet.

ANNIE: Which is how we've stayed together so long. I was that girl in the boarding house. What, you thought our double booking was a coincidence?

DOCTOR: Never. But I'm pleased to find the universe continues to surprise me. I thought this hotel merely contained the three things any fire needs. The fuel of the cross-stitch convention, the oxygen of Doctor Pembroke's time experiment, and the spark of your psychic ability, Annie.

BENNY: But there was also the baby. Something to put the fire out.

DOCTOR: Exactly. A coincidence of the utmost grace.

MICHAEL: Knowing the Scourge, I suspect it took our deception to make it all explode. Or my cowardice.

ANNIE: So no more of that. From now on it's me and him, and who cares who knows it.

BENNY: A joining of science and

ANNIE: Mysticism. The real thing. I have a lot of catching up to do.

MICHAEL: And I have to continue my experiments, if that's all right.

DOCTOR: You don't need my permission. There are no things Man isn't meant to know, Doctor Pembroke.

BENNY: Except two women at once.

MICHAEL: I'm er satisfied with that your hypothesis is true, Professor Summerfield.

GARY: Hey, you lot, you're never going to believe

BENNY: Gary! How was your emergency committee meeting?

GARY: They took a vote, and they forgave me. Unanimously!

ACE: Least they could do. You helped save their bottoms.

GARY: Well, I do have to pay the money back in monthly instalments.

BENNY: Who would have thought cross-stitchers would be so finicky.

GARY: Anyway, I get to stay on the team, without access to any cash, and they're already talking about reorganising this event. Everything's going to be okay.

DOCTOR: I see. So a stitch in time saved your bacon.

BENNY + ACE: Doctor.

DOCTOR: Oh, don't be so hard on me. I'm only human.